



NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**WHY UW: FACTORING IN THE DECISION POINT FOR
UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE**

by

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December 2012

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE December 2012	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE WHY UW: FACTORING IN THE DECISION POINT FOR UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Ryan C. Agee, Maurice K. DuClos				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB Protocol number ____ N/A ____.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) There has been a dramatic unconventional warfare (UW) renaissance in recent years. Much of the published material on the subject has been focused on <i>what</i> unconventional warfare is, re-defining it, and attempting to frame the concept of its use as it relates to the current military operational environment. Little work has been produced that examines the more basic question: Why UW? This research begins where the 2009 redefinition of UW left off. Identifying an expanded field of 51 cases of U.S.-sponsored unconventional warfare from 1892 to 2010, the authors select four cases that represent a wide variety of UW methods, locations, and goals. These four cases of UW are compared with one case of conventional warfare focusing on the question: What are the factors that lead to the use of unconventional warfare as a strategic policy option? This study empirically identifies what factors lead to the use of unconventional warfare. The results of this study provide recommendations for the advancement of UW as a strategic option. By understanding the <i>why</i> first, as in why unconventional warfare is chosen as a method of operation, the subsequent questions of <i>how</i> and <i>who</i> become easier to answer.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Unconventional Warfare, UW, Decision Points, Networks, Covert Action, Covert Operations, Irregular Warfare, Special Forces, Phase 0, Left of Beginning, Operational Steady State, TPAJAX, STCIRCUS, STBARNUM, OPHOTFOOT, OPWHITESTAR, Iran-Contra, OPJUSTCAUSE, Dynamic Typology, UW Database, UW in Cold War, Golden Era of UW, Revolution, Resistance, Insurgency, Guerilla Warfare, Synthetic-Resistance, Synthetic-Revolution, Organic-Resistance, Organic-Revolution, Central Intelligence Agency, CIA, OSS Legacy, UW Capability, UW Mechanism, UW Feedback Loops, UW Factors, Influence on Policy, Internal Enablers, External Enablers, Internal Constraints, External Constraints.			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 197	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	

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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

There has been a dramatic unconventional warfare (UW) renaissance in recent years. Much of the published material on the subject has been focused on *what* unconventional warfare is, re-defining it, and attempting to frame the concept of its use as it relates to the current military operational environment. Little work has been produced that examines the more basic question: Why UW?

This research begins where the 2009 redefinition of UW left off. Identifying an expanded field of 51 cases of U.S.-sponsored unconventional warfare from 1892 to 2010, the authors select four cases that represent a wide variety of UW methods, locations, and goals. These four cases of UW are compared with one case of conventional warfare focusing on the question:

What are the factors that lead to the use of unconventional warfare as a strategic policy option?

This study empirically identifies what factors lead to the use of unconventional warfare. The results of this study provide recommendations for the advancement of UW as a strategic option. By understanding the *why* first, as in why unconventional warfare is chosen as a method of operation, the subsequent questions of *how* and *who* become easier to answer.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION: THE NEW LANDSCAPE OF UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE.....	1
A. U.S. SPONSORED UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE	1
B. THE EVOLUTION OF THE LANGUAGE OF UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE AND ITS IMPACT OF THE FIELD.....	3
C. THE LANDSCAPE REDEFINED AND RECREATED	5
D. THE STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE THESI	6
II. CASE SELECTION.....	9
A. THE EXPANDED FIELD OF UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE.....	9
B. SEPARATING THE CASES BY PERIODS: THE THREE MAJOR ERAS	11
1. The Colonial Period	12
2. The Cold War.....	12
3. Hegemony of Power–Uncontested to Contested	14
C. THE “GOLDEN ERA” OF UW	14
D. CATEGORIZING CASES BY TYPE-THE DYNAMIC TYPOLOGY	15
1. Revolution Versus Resistance.....	17
2. Organic Inception versus External Synthesis	17
E. UW CASE SELECTION.....	18
F. NEGATIVE CASE SELECTION.....	20
G. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN UW CASES AND NON-CASE	22
III. CASE STUDIES.....	25
A. CASE I: IRAN–1953	25
1. Introduction	25
2. Background.....	26
3. Analysis	36
a. <i>Decision Point</i>	36
b. <i>Internal Enablers</i>	38
c. <i>External Enablers</i>	41
d. <i>Internal Constraints</i>	45
e. <i>External Constraints</i>	45
4. Summary	46
B. CASE II. TIBET, 1956–1974.....	49
1. Introduction	49
2. Background.....	50
3. Analysis	57
a. <i>The Decision Point</i>	58
b. <i>Internal Enablers</i>	59
c. <i>External Enablers</i>	64
d. <i>Internal Constraints</i>	68

e.	<i>External Constraints</i>	69
4.	Summary	70
C.	CASE III: LAOS, 1958–1973	71
1.	Introduction	71
2.	Background	71
3.	Analysis	83
a.	<i>Decision Point</i>	83
b.	<i>Internal Enablers</i>	85
c.	<i>External Enablers</i>	89
d.	<i>Internal Constraints</i>	90
e.	<i>External Constraints</i>	91
4.	Summary	91
D.	CASE IV: NICARAGUA 1981–1986	93
1.	Introduction	93
2.	Background	93
3.	Analysis	105
a.	<i>Decision Point</i>	105
b.	<i>Internal Enablers</i>	106
c.	<i>External Enablers</i>	109
d.	<i>Internal Constraints</i>	110
e.	<i>External Constraints</i>	112
4.	Summary	112
E.	CASE V: PANAMA, 1988–1990	115
1.	Introduction	115
2.	Background	115
3.	Analysis	126
a.	<i>Decision Point</i>	126
b.	<i>Internal Enablers</i>	127
c.	<i>External Enablers</i>	129
d.	<i>Internal Constraints</i>	132
e.	<i>External Constraints</i>	135
4.	Summary	135
IV.	ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	137
A.	ANALYSIS OF THE ENABLERS	137
1.	Variable 1. Extant UW Capability	141
2.	Variable 2. The Presence of Positive UW Feedback Loops	143
3.	Variable 3. The Impracticality of Conventional Warfare	145
B.	ADDITIONAL FINDINGS	148
1.	Expanding and Refining UW Knowledgebase	148
2.	Refining Contextual UW Typology	149
3.	UW Network Primacy and Relevancy	150
4.	Objective Alignment	152
V.	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	155
A.	CONCLUSION	155
B.	RECOMMENDATIONS	157

1. Academic Community	157
2. UW Stakeholders	158
a. <i>Related to the First Variable: UW Capability</i>	158
b. <i>Related to the Second Variable: Influence DMs towards choosing UW</i>	160
LIST OF REFERENCES.....	161
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	177

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Cases of U.S. sponsored UW.	11
Figure 2.	Periods of U.S. sponsored UW	12
Figure 3.	Cases of U.S. Sponsored UW by Period.....	15
Figure 4.	The Dynamic Typology of UW.....	16
Figure 5.	Cold War Cases plotted on the Dynamic Typology of UW	19
Figure 6.	“Instances of Use of U.S. Armed Forces Abroad,” During the Cold War	22
Figure 7.	Decision Point Timeline for Iran	38
Figure 8.	Decision Point Timeline: Tibet.....	59
Figure 9.	Decision Point Timeline for Laos.....	85
Figure 10.	Decision Point Timeline for Nicaragua	106
Figure 11.	Decision Point Timeline for Panama	127
Figure 12.	Enablers Consistent in All Four Cases and Identified as General UW Factors	139
Figure 13.	Enablers Specific to Particular Cases, Insufficient to be General Factors	140
Figure 14.	Conceptual Framework of Variables 1, 2 and 3	148

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIOC	Anglo-Iranian Oil Company
ANL	<i>Armée Nationale Laotienne</i> (Lao National Army)
ASO	Advanced Special Operations
CAT	Civil Air Transport (CIA)
CGSC	Command and General Staff College
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CT	Counterterrorism
CW	Conventional Warfare
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DM	Decision Maker/Dungeon Master
DMZ	De-Militarized Zone (Korea)
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
ECCOIL	Eastern Construction Company in Laos (Filipino)
FDN	<i>Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense</i> (Nicaragua, Contras)
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FSLN	<i>Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional</i> (Nicaragua, Sandinistas)
GCC	Geographic Combatant Commander
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
ICC	International Control Commission
ISA	Intelligence Support Activities
IW	Irregular Warfare
JCET	Joint Combined Exchange Training
JFKSWCS	John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School
JSOTF	Joint Special Operations Task Force
JTF	Joint Task Force
JUSMAG	Joint United States Military Advisory Group
KMT	Kuomintang
LIC	Low Intensity Conflict
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MAG	Military Advisory Group
MTT	Mobile Training Team
NSC	National Security Council
NVN	North Vietnam
ODA	Operational Detachment-Alpha
OP	Operation
OPC	Office of Policy Coordination
OPE	Operational Preparation of the Environment
OSS	Office of Strategic Services

PARU	Police Aerial Reconnaissance (Reinforcement) Unit (Thai)
PDF	Panamanian Defense Forces
PEO	Program Evaluation Office
PLA	Peoples' Liberation Army (China)
PM	Para-Military (CIA)
PRC	Peoples' Republic of China
PYSOP	Psychological Operation
ROC	Republic of China
ROK	Republic of Korea
SAT	Southern Air Transport airlines (CIA)
SF	Special Forces (U.S. Army)
SFF	Special Frontier Force (India)
SGU	Special Guerilla Unit
SIS	Special Intelligence Service
SOD	Special Operations Division
SOF	Special Operations Force
SOG	Studies and Observations Group
SouthCom	Southern Command
TNP	Thai National Police
UCLA	Unilaterally Controlled Latino Assets
UDN	Union Democratica Nicaraguenese (Nicaragua)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USASOC	United States Army Special Operations Command
USOM	United States Operations Mission
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UW	Unconventional Warfare

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to extend our deepest thanks to the faculty of the Defense Analysis Department at the Naval Postgraduate School, particularly, Dr. Blanken, Professor Lee, Professor Burkett, Dr. Rothstein, Dr. McCormick, and Dr. Sepp. Also, Ms. Duncan and COL Wilson, who made the flexibility in course loads and research possible and helped us to realize our goals and focus on unconventional warfare. Thanks to fellow researcher, Lisa Cathey, producer and author of the documentary *CIA in Tibet*, for taking her time to answer seemingly the simplest of questions on Tibet and for responding to every e-mail—even during the holiday season. Also to the many academics and professionals that have devoted energy and time in the field of unconventional warfare. Our utmost respect goes to the professionals that risked their lives executing such campaigns, without much fanfare or understanding from the public. Finally, and most close to our hearts, we thank our families for allowing us the freedom of maneuver to engage in our work which would not be possible without your support.

-De Oppresso Liber

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I. INTRODUCTION: THE NEW LANDSCAPE OF UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

“It is well known that when you do anything, unless you understand its actual circumstances, its nature and its relations to other things, you will not know the laws governing it, or know how to do it, or be able to do it well.”

—Mao Tse-Tung, December 1936¹

A. U.S. SPONSORED UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

There has been a dramatic unconventional warfare renaissance in recent years within the media, academia, among policy makers and the military special operations community in the United States.² Returning to the origins of Special Forces is a currently popular idea that may be an answer to the organization’s relevance, missions and roles in the changing world.³ Much of the published material on the subject has been focused on what unconventional warfare is, on re-defining it, and attempting to frame the concept of its use as it relates to the current military operational environment. Little work, if any, has been produced that examines the more basic question: Why? Why would unconventional warfare be chosen over traditional warfare? Under what conditions? In order to answer these questions, this study will focus on the research question: What are the factors that lead to the use of unconventional warfare as a strategic policy option?

¹ Mao Tse-Tung, *Problems of Strategy in China’s Revolutionary War*, Selected Works, Vol. I (Whitefish, MT: Literary Licensing, LLC. 2011), 179.

² One example from a *Washington Post* op-ed titled “The Risks of Inaction in Syria,” Senators John McCain, Lindsey Graham, and Joseph Lieberman argued for stepped-up U.S. intervention in Syria’s civil war in what amounted to a UW campaign, see http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/mccain-lieberman-and-graham-the-risks-of-inaction-in-syria/2012/08/05/4a63585c-dd91-11e1-8e43-4a3c4375504a_story.html, (accessed on 20 November 2012).

³ Throughout this paper the term *Special Forces* or SF refers specifically to the U.S. Army special operations unit commonly known as *Green Berets*. All other units of advanced capability or assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) are referred to as *Special Operations Forces* or SOF. While other SOF units may have roles in modern unconventional warfare campaigns, Special Forces are the only unit specifically established for UW with direct lineage from the OSS in its founding members.

The President of the United States has the responsibility to articulate and execute the nation's grand strategy.⁴ He has a wide array of tools at his disposal, including declaring and sending troops into total war, as seen in the devastation from World War II, to placing the most limited economic sanctions on a foreign country. Understanding the conditions under which unconventional warfare is chosen as a tool of U.S. policy adds to the understanding of U.S. policy at large and explains many related questions, such as the particular conditions under which such campaigns would be successful. Finally, if we can understand the *why* first, as in why unconventional warfare is the choice method of operation, then subsequent questions of *how* and *who* will be much easier to answer. As such, this thesis is a qualitative analysis of four cases of U.S. sponsored unconventional warfare, in addition to one case of U.S. conventional warfare, to answer questions regarding *why* these actions were chosen.⁵ By examining the existing doctrine and applicable case studies of past campaigns, this thesis will attempt to identify the factors that led decision makers to utilize unconventional warfare as a means to enforce U.S. foreign policy. This research will expand the existing body of unconventional warfare literature and provide an analysis of decision factors that were a part of U.S. sponsored unconventional warfare campaigns. This work is relevant to the continued future application of unconventional warfare as a national strategic option. Additionally, understanding the historical applications of unconventional warfare will help identify some actions or methods that should be

4 The idea of encompassing political, economic, ideological, and technological elements into the concept of strategy has existed since ancient times. See Edward Mead Earle, *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1941). These elements are commonly described as "Grand Strategy." See also Michael Howard, "The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy." *Foreign Affairs*. Summer 1979 No. 5. 975–986. For the purposes of this thesis, *strategy* and *grand strategy* are used interchangeably.

5 Throughout this paper the term "unconventional warfare" or UW is used as defined by current U.S. doctrine (see below) it does not imply a connection between the mission and any specific unit or organization within the Department of Defense or U.S. government. Alternately the term "conventional warfare" is used in this paper to describe *traditional military use of force* and is not synonymous or exclusive to any specific military unit. For the purpose of this paper, both terms, "unconventional" and "conventional warfare" describe the type of *campaign* used to accomplish U.S. national strategy. Special Operations Forces or SOF, in this context, can be used in "conventional warfare" campaigns and in theory General Purpose Forces or GPF could be used in "unconventional warfare" campaigns as well.

sustained, and some that must be improved upon, in the future. If the context in which unconventional warfare is utilized can be better described, then policy, organizational design, and technology will help improve the functionality of unconventional warfare.

B. THE EVOLUTION OF THE LANGUAGE OF UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE AND ITS IMPACT OF THE FIELD

Unconventional warfare, or UW, is a term that has been used since the 1950s to describe a type of warfare that stretches back hundreds if not thousands of years. Over the years, the terms guerrilla warfare, revolutionary warfare, partisan warfare, small wars, low intensity conflict, resistance, insurgency, fifth-column, unconventional warfare, irregular warfare, special operations and even terrorism had become somewhat interchangeable. Derek Jones' Command and General Staff College thesis articulated a discussion that was being held in team rooms and around water coolers across the Special Forces community; that there was a lack of understanding and a need for a clear and concise definition of what UW was and how to do it. Jones proposed an old idea, that words matter, not just because they help us describe specific ideas; words matter because they have the power to transfer entire belief systems to others.⁶ Glenn Hastedt, Professor of Political Science at James Madison University and author of *American Foreign Policy* wrote that the importance is more than mere words it is an entire language:

The language of small wars is different. Here, we tend to start by talking about the reasons for wars, the *casus belli*. This is not to say that they do not involve the national interest but that this phrase by itself does not convey a sense of why the war began. They often appear to be wars of

⁶ Derek Jones, "Ending the Debate: Unconventional Warfare, Foreign Internal Defense and Why Words Matter" (Master's thesis, Fort Leavenworth: CGSC, 2006).

choice rather than wars of necessity. In talking about small wars we tend to classify them in terms of the concrete issues that gave them life.⁷

In order to clarify the definition, to find the right words, the Special Forces community came together in April of 2009. From that working group, emerged the beginnings of a new language of UW. Discussions began on the implications that new definition would have on the community for training, roles, and organizations.⁸ The value in the new definition was to specifically focus on UW as a *mission* not a *method*. Unconventional warfare was re-defined as:

Activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary and guerrilla force in a denied area.⁹

Unconventional warfare in this context is no longer synonymous with unconventional units, tactics, or methods. UW is clearly delineated as the activities or actions of the *external sponsor*, not the resistance movement. This *sponsor-centric mission-focused* distinction provides a more defined understanding of the role of the *actor* and desired *end state* in a UW campaign. This new perspective paves the way for resurgence of studies and theory development in the field. To regard UW as a mission, rather than as a method,

7 "Casus belli" is a Latin expression used by strategists meaning the justification for acts of war. "The opposite is the language of large wars, which speaks of windows of opportunity, where leaders calculate they can win; windows of fear, where leaders do not believe they can win but see the consequences of inaction as so dire that they feel forced to try to go to war; and accidents, where neither side wanted war but find themselves fighting one. This language also underlies our efforts to stop big wars." Glenn P. Hastedt, *American Foreign Policy Course*, 9th Edition (On-line edition: Pearson Publishing, 2012), 340.

8 Author participated in the series of UW Evolution working groups from 2009–2010 as a representative of 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) See also David M. Witty, "The Great UW Debate," *Special Warfare*, 23 No.2 (March-April 2010); Derek Jones, *Ending the Debate: Unconventional Warfare, Foreign Internal Defense and Why Words Matter*, (Master's Thesis, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas CGSC, 2006); Mark Grdovic, *Developing a Common Understanding of Unconventional Warfare*, JFQ / issue 57, 2d quarter (Online edition, NDU Press, 2010).

9 USSOCOM approved definition. Department of the Army, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*, Training Circular (TC) 18–01 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, November 2010).

allows researchers to look back at historical operations that have long been considered cornerstones of UW with a new perspective. Some cases, long accepted, as UW operations may not meet the parameters of the new definition, while still falling under the umbrella of irregular warfare.¹⁰ Other cases not previously considered UW could be included. Finally the new definition allows researchers to expand on the field, to create a new language, to re-evaluate and propose new theories looking at historical cases with more specific application to modern context.

C. THE LANDSCAPE REDEFINED AND RECREATED

Looking back at historical cases through the lens of the new definition opens up a large number of UW cases that were previously overlooked.¹¹ Existing research indicates that there is no definitive study that answers the question proposed in this study. Most literature on the topic, even those published after the re-definition, either continue to use the term to describe methods or mindset that are either oblivious or in disagreement of the new definition.¹² One researcher, Robert Kelley, prior to the re-definition, identified a gap in existing academic work from a U.S. sponsor perspective. He explained, “While a detailed search of the Library of Congress revealed numerous academic works on the theory and

¹⁰ IW is defined as a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary’s power, influence, and will. *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication 1–02 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, November 8, 2010).

¹¹ These include: non-military covert actions, coup d’état, non-violent, cases whose goal was disruption or coercion, political subversion, and cases that ell out due to overlap with FID or UW in support of general war, etc. Some examples of this are the Solidarity Movement in Poland, Indonesia in 1958, Argentina in 1976, and South Vietnam in 1963, see expanded field Chapter II.

¹² While no published research has been identified by this study that directly addresses the sponsorship from the U.S. perspective there have been several recent works on surrogate and proxy warfare that present many similar concepts and ideas; See Ariel Ahram *Proxy Warriors: The Rise and Fall of State-Sponsored Militias* (Stanford Security Studies, 2011); Chris Loveman, “Assessing the Phenomenon of Proxy Intervention.” In: *Journal of Conflict, Security, and Development*. (2002) 30–48; Klaus Schlichte, “With the State against the state? The Formation of Armed Groups.” In: Krause, Keith, Ed. (2010); *Armed Groups and Contemporary Conflicts: Challenging the Weberian State*.45–63. Oxon: Routledge (2010); Philip Towle, “The Strategy of War by Proxy.” *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies*, Vol. 126. No.1, 24–5.

practice of *communist* sponsored insurgency against the free world. There were *no* scholarly works on the theory of *democratic* support to an insurgency.”¹³ [Emphasis added] There are various theories and strategies to explain the evolution of insurgencies their ideologies and grievances. Research in the field of UW has centered on these theories determining why insurgency groups form and why individuals join them.¹⁴ However, understanding the reasons *why* an *external* actor would sponsor a movement from the U.S. perspective has yet to be explored.

D. THE STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE THESIS

The structure of this thesis will include five chapters. In the introductory chapter, the landscape and evolution of the definition of unconventional warfare was discussed along with the relevance to the field. The research question was introduced: What are the factors that lead to the use of unconventional warfare as a strategic policy option? To answer this question, the following process will be followed: Chapter II will utilize a four-step process in order to select historical cases of UW with high degrees of variance. In step one the entire field of UW cases will be presented based on the parameters set by the new definition. During step two the field will be further divided into three time periods separated by significant, global shaping events: The Colonial period, the Cold War period and the period of U.S. Hegemony of Power. The goal of this step is to identify the period with the greatest number of cases to allow for the widest variations in

13 Robert Kelley, “U.S. Army Special Forces Unconventional Warfare Doctrine: Engine of Change or Relic of the Past,” (Master’s thesis: Naval War College, 2000).

14 There are numerous studies on insurgency theory including: Ernesto Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, (Nebraska: Bison Books, 1998); Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, (New York, NY: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2009); Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare*, (Washington DC: Potomac Books Inc., 2002); David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009); Walter Laqueur *Guerrilla: A Historical and Critical Study*. (Boston, Massachusetts: Little Brown, 1976); Nathan Leites, and Charles Wolf, Jr. *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*. (Chicago, Illinois: Markham, 1970); Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counterterrorism, 1940–1990*, (New York NY: Pantheon, 1992); Bard E. O’Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, Second Edition Revised, (Washington DC: Potomac Books Inc., 2005); this material was discussed and debated in Professor Gordon McCormick’s “Seminar in Guerrilla Warfare,” Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2011.

locations, methods, goals, and initiation. Step three, the remaining cases separated into four groups by period differentiated based on how and why the movement was formed. Finally, step four will result in one case being chosen from each quadrant or type. The cases selected will cover the widest range of variation across the spectrum of goals, methods, times and locations. One case of conventional warfare will be selected from the CRS database.¹⁵ This will allow for comparison against the findings from the UW cases.

Chapter III will examine the four cases of UW and the one non-case. Each case will be presented in historical context including details and events that may have shaped the decision to use UW. The events will be divided into those internal to the U.S. and those that were external. Both will be placed on a linear timeline in order to identify the decision point for each case. Overlaying the UW doctrinal phase template on the timelines of cases is one way to help determine the decision point.¹⁶ This helps simplify the process by identifying events that precede the decision point. This point of time is alternately called *left of beginning* or *Phase-0*.¹⁷ The objective of the case studies is to identify the events that occur

15 U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *Instances of Use of U.S. Armed Forces Abroad, 1798–2009*, by Richard Grimmett, CRS Report RL32170 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, 2010), <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rl32170.pdf> (accessed on 18 November 2012).

16 The seven-phase UW framework is a conceptual construct that aids in planning. It is meant to depict the phases of a U.S. sponsored UW campaign. *Phase I: Preparation, Phase II: Initial Contact, Phase III: Infiltration, Phase IV: Organization, Phase V: Build-up, Phase VI: Employment, Phase VII: Transition*. Department of the Army, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*, Training Circular (TC) 18–01 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2010), 1–8 sec. 1–44.

17 “Left of beginning” and “Phase-0” are interchangeable terms used to describe the conceptual environment and activities leading up to the policy decision to execute a UW campaign. Most discussions on this concept, within the SF community, tend to focus on specific tactical/operational activities, such as Operations Preparation of the Environment (OPE), in order to determine a check list of activities that happen in a linear pre-phase leading up to the event horizon of the decision point. However, this study will present left of beginning/Phase-0 as an “operational *steady state* environment” with countless events, random or planned, that *may* coalesce and support the decision to execute UW, conventional warfare (CW) or neither to continue in the steady state. Lt. Gen. John Mulholland, former Commanding General of U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), coined the term “left of beginning.” His assessment, based on experience as a TSOC commander, is that the critical point in time where military UW skills are crucially relevant to decision makers is “left of the beginning” of a policy decision contemplated by the United States Government. *Unconventional Warfare Evolution*, USASOC leadership briefing, Aug. 23, 2010, *Special Warfare Magazine*, (March-April edition 2011).

during this period of time, which for the purpose of this study will be referred to as the *operational steady state environment* or simply the *steady state*. This approach will allow this study to examine historical cases of UW through the lens of current doctrine. Identifying the decision point *also*, therefore, identifies *phase zero* and the events and activities that fall *left* of it. Furthermore, historical retrospect dispels the need to speculate if an activity or event will, or will not, lead to UW because it is certain in these cases they did. The events and details relevant to the case that are identified in the steady state will be divided into *internal* and *external*, *enablers* and *constraints*. Because all of the cases presented in this study, except for the non-case, resulted in the decision to do UW, any constraints identified should be outweighed by the enablers and will include a description of how they were overcome. The enablers will be summarized in their heading description. This will allow for easier comparison and analysis in the final next chapter.

Chapter IV will be the comparative analysis of the *enablers* from all the cases. The enablers will then be compared across the cases to eliminate outliers that may have enabled only one case but are not present in all four. Eliminating any UW enablers that are also present in the non-case will shorten the remaining list of enablers further into what will be called *factors*. Finally, the factors will be further synthesized into *variables*.¹⁸ The analysis will end with the proposal of a conceptual framework explaining the decision to use UW.

Chapter V will summarize the entire thesis and offer any recommendations for either future research or suggestions for consideration by the UW stakeholder community.

¹⁸ The research method used in this research attempts to identify two variables; the independent variable (IV) and the dependent variable (DV). In the most basic sense two variables are needed to examine a phenomenon (a policy, a event, a decision, etc.) and determine if there is an effect on some other thing (The decision to use UW). Any other variables identified that effect the state or range of the IV's affect on the DV are conditional variables (CV). This process is outlined in Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. (Berkeley CA: University of California, 1987).

II. CASE SELECTION

A. THE EXPANDED FIELD OF UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

Based on the expansion of the field of UW created by the new definition discussed in Chapter I, there have been 51 estimated cases of U.S. sponsored unconventional warfare from 1892 to 2010.¹⁹ These cases are listed in Figure 1.²⁰ While validating the level of U.S. involvement in each case is beyond the scope of this study, the list provides a starting point to begin evaluation and further assessment for case selection. The list includes only cases of stand-alone UW campaigns regardless of what element in the US government was involved, and includes a variety of methods ranging from political subversion, *coup d'état*, and armed conflict in order to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow the foreign government or occupying power. The list only includes UW operations whose details were available through open sources, however, presumably some events were excluded due to classification. Other cases were not included because they were uncorroborated, or simply did not meet the criteria of the work. UW operations or campaigns that were in support of a greater conventional warfare

19 The starting point for this list, though incomplete, was Kinzer's *Overthrow*. While not an academic work, the *Economist* selected this book as one of its ten "Books of the Year in 2003" in history. Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow, America's Century of Regime Change From Hawaii to Iraq* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2006)

20 Note that the cases listed are not without debate. To definitively list and corroborate all cases of U.S. sponsored UW, through primary sources, is far beyond the scope of this research. However, it was only through the failed attempt by the authors to locate such an exhaustive list that warranted this expedient collection of *alleged* U.S. sponsored UW cases. Additional research by scholars, delving into this niche category, is necessary and one of the recommended findings of this research.

effort were also excluded.²¹ In addition to operations in support of greater conventional warfare campaigns, operations or campaigns of Foreign Internal Defense (FID) have also been omitted.²²

21 According to current doctrine the United States conducts two types of unconventional warfare, either with the anticipation of large-scale U.S. military involvement or without anticipation of large-scale U.S. military involvement. In UW support to GENERAL WAR: There are two possible goals of large-scale involvement. The goal is either to facilitate the eventual introduction of conventional forces or to divert enemy resources away from other parts of the operational area. In UW support to LIMITED WAR: The overall operation takes place in the absence of overt or eventual hostilities from the sponsor. Department of the Army, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*, Training Circular (TC) 18-01 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, November 2010), 1-7-1-8.

The focus of this research specifically on *stand-alone* cases of UW also addresses the discussion of the value of SF (and SOF) roles either as a primary stand-alone effort or supporting effort for conventional warfare. This discussion best represented by authors James Kiras on one side and David Tucker and Christopher Lamb on the other. The Kiras' proposal is that SOF operations are best used in support of CW operations. David Tucker and Christopher Lamb argue the opposite and contend that strategic choices will dictate whether SOF is employed directly or indirectly, as well as if SOF is employed in support of conventional operations or as the leading effort. They assert that SOF's greatest strategic value is when they are employed independently because it frees CF to conduct other operations. See: James D Kiras, *Special Operations and Strategy: From World War II to the War on Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 5, 63; David Tucker and Christopher J. Lamb, *United States Special Operation Forces* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 143, 158, 176-178, 161. This discussion formed the basis of comparison used in Professor Hy Rothstein's *History of Special Operations* course, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2011 See also; *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006).

22 According to terms defined in this research during *Revolution*, UW becomes the mechanism for change; it does not counter change. UW used to support Revolution therefore is offensive in nature. Foreign Internal Defense (FID) counters change. For example: When a sitting democratic government is being challenged but has not yet been overthrown, externally sponsored methods to defend the power base, no matter how conventional or irregular, fall within the operational task of FID, and are not UW. A Revolution can take place to install a new social system, and once complete, the operation will change to FID in order to secure, defend, and consolidate power. Discerning the operational context is necessary to understand the role of UW, specifically that it is by its nature, operationally offensive, and not defensive. Cases were viewed in this database as single iterations of offense or defense to simplify validation.

Case	Start	End	Case	Start	End	Case	Start	End
Hawaii	1892	1893	Tibet	1957	1974	Seychelles	1979	1981
Panama	1903	1903	Laos	1957	1973	Afghanistan	1979	1989
Nicaragua	1909	1912	Indonesia	1958	1958	Poland	1980	1989
Mexico	1913	1913	Cuba	1959	1988	Nicaragua	1981	1986
Russia	1917	1922	Congo	1960	1965	Suriname	1982	1982
Cuba	1933	1933	Zaire	1960	1966	Haiti	1984	1984
Philippines	1945	1953	Haiti	1961	1963	Philippines	1986	1986
Syria	1949	1949	S. Vietnam	1961	1963	Fiji	1987	1987
Albania	1949	1953	Brazil	1961	1964	Iraq	1992	1996
Italy	1950	1970	D. Republic	1963	1965	Afghanistan	2001	2002
E. Germany	1950	1989	Bolivia	1964	1975	Venezuela	2002	2002
China(Burma)	1951	1954	Chile	1964	1973	Iraq	2003	2003
Guatemala	1952	1954	Ghana	1966	1966	Iran	2005	Present
Iran	1953	1953	Iraq	1972	1975	Somalia	2006	2007
Br. Guiana	1953	1964	Angola	1975	1991	Honduras	2009	2009
Costa Rica	1955	1958	Jamaica	1976	1980	Libya	2010	2012
Cambodia	1955	1970	Argentina	1976	1976	Ecuador	2010	2010

Figure 1. Cases of U.S. sponsored UW.

B. SEPARATING THE CASES BY PERIODS: THE THREE MAJOR ERAS

In order to further refine the process of case selection the cases were divided across three major time periods, with the demarcation lines marked by significant, global shaping events. These three time periods used for this study are: the Colonial Period, Cold War, and Hegemony of Power. The Period of Hegemony is further divided into uncontested and contested periods. The time periods are delineated by the global shaping events. While debates exist in international relations theory and political science, concerning the division of the U.S. time periods, the delineation of time periods in this work do not proscribe to one argument or another. They are simply identified as a means to divide cases by context of time (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Periods of U.S. sponsored UW

1. The Colonial Period

During this period, the world saw the industrial revolution make or break powerful countries. Raw materials, resources, and labor forces became ever more important. The desire for power heightened. Further justification for colonization ensued, and conflict increased. The Colonial Period saw the U.S. emerge as a regional power. It also marked the first time the U.S. used UW, conducted in a foreign country when the U.S. backed a revolution in Hawaii that would lead to its annexation. More episodes would follow leading up to World War II. After the conflict, the world would see the end of colonialism as parent countries struggled to maintain control and cover the expenses of reconstruction at home and in their colonies.²³

2. The Cold War

Two super powers emerged from World War II, the USSR, championing the global communist revolution, and the USA, beacon of democracy and free markets. The two powers carved up the world by influence, aid, and treaties, thus beginning a new era of proxy war and alliances that would touch nearly every state. The Cold War was an interesting time period for the United States in its new role. The world was in awe of the recently exhibited power of nuclear weapons and largely concerned with the massive and still mobilized standing

²³ Lotta Harbom and Peter Wallensteen, "Armed Conflicts, 1946–2009" *Journal of Peace Research* 47 (2010) 501–509, identify four categories of warfare: Interstate War, Intrastate War (civil wars), Internationalized internal war (insurgencies), and Extrasystemic War – between a state and a non-state group outside its own territory, most typical cases being colonial wars. The last case identified in the study ended in 1974.

armies of the USSR in Eastern Europe. Simultaneously, Soviet communists were stoking the flames of nationalism and class warfare. They attempted to dominate the world in global revolution. The U.S. developed a strategy of containment to curb the spread of the Soviet Bloc and began an arms race to deter the USSR.

World War II also had a large effect on the average world citizen. A large majority had been affected by the war machines, which sought through attrition warfare, a decisive victory. In America, as with most of the remaining world, nobody wanted to fight another war anytime soon. However, the USSR caused paranoia when, after the war concluded and most of the world's armies demobilized, they maintained their standing army. Later, when the USSR revealed its achievement and possession of nuclear weapons, it further escalated the schism and distrust between the two emerging superpowers.

This period of history was marked by several crises that escalated to near war and threatened the mutual destruction of both countries by the use of nuclear weaponry. However, despite the many risks of escalation, both countries continued to maneuver throughout the world to expand their respective influence and assure the security of their own interests. Author Cole Blasier, while describing the superpowers' intervention during the Cold War, writes in *The Giant's Rival*, due to "huge power disparities between large and small countries, temptation to intervene is irresistible. Since 1945 the U.S. has been cautious about acting directly against the USSR as has the USSR against the U.S.." ²⁴ Therefore, intervention, proxy wars, and some manifestations of open conflict between a non-super power country and the U.S. or USSR occurred numerous times during the Cold War.

Each of the two super powers competed to out-manuever the other, diplomatically, technologically, and economically. The ideologies of each were juggernauts, fixed and unshakeable, yet both countries continued to spread their influence across the globe. In spite of this, the end of this period would not come

²⁴ Cole Blasier, *The Giants Rival: The USSR and Latin America* (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983), 156–157.

as a result of direct confrontation. Instead, the end came because the high cost of competition was unsustainable.

3. Hegemony of Power—Uncontested to Contested

As the USSR collapsed, the new period began in which the U.S. consolidated power. The Cold War was won. The U.S. role as beacon for democracy now evolved into world police. In its effort to attain global dominance during the Cold War, America developed a reliance on UW to affect foreign policy. UW was cost efficient, required less manpower, was more easily hidden through covertness, and allowed for deniability of actions counter to American ideals. Despite total conventional military dominance, the U.S. continued its practice of UW during the period of Hegemony of Power. This period lasted through the new millennium. The threshold, however, is unclear. The attacks on 9/11 are merely the spike in the crescendo of ever increasing violence through terrorism. After 9/11, the subsequent U.S. involvement in wars in Afghanistan, the Philippines, and Iraq set economic conditions that allowed Brazil, Russia, India, and China to close the gap with the U.S. economically. Although no country can yet directly challenge U.S. military power, contestation has occurred indirectly by non-state actors and regional powers. This asymmetric challenge reflects the work of Author Emily Goldman of *Power in Uncertain Times*, who theorizes that adapting can deliver a win if direct competition cannot.²⁵

C. THE “GOLDEN ERA” OF UW

Once the span of time in which all cases of U.S.-sponsored UW had occurred was divided into the three periods, it is easy to observe the high concentration of UW cases (37) that occurred in the Cold War period. To frame the concentration of cases per period, this study examined the frequency of cases per decade. The colonial period, spanning 5.5 decades with 6 total cases, had a frequency of 1.1 cases per decade. The period of Hegemony, combining

²⁵ Emily O. Goldman, *Power in Uncertain Times: Strategy in the Fog of Peace*. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011).

both sub-periods, had 9 cases and spanned 2 decades with a frequency of 4.5 cases per decade. The Cold War period saw 37 cases over 4.5 decades resulting in a frequency of 8.2 cases per decade. There was a clear spike in the number of cases in this period. Due to this observation, this research focused on this high-density period (See Figure 3).

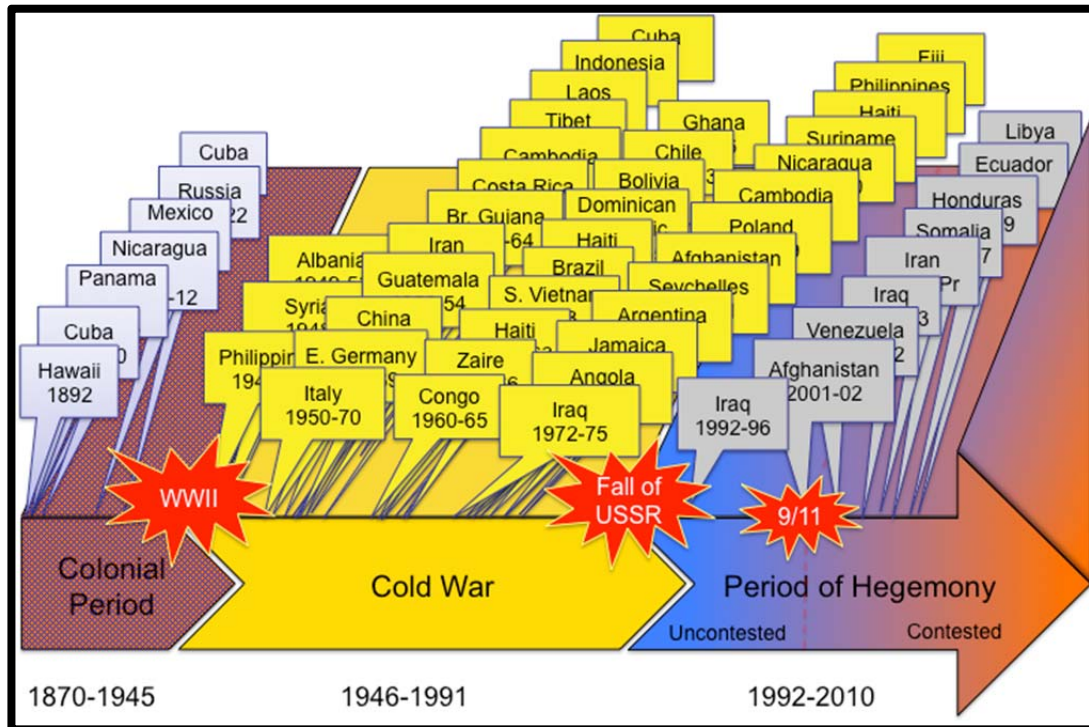


Figure 3. Cases of U.S. Sponsored UW by Period

D. CATEGORIZING CASES BY TYPE-THE DYNAMIC TYPOLOGY

During the research, a significant difference in the nature of the movement and the origins between cases began to emerge. This led to the development of a dynamic typology in which cases could be sorted and to further understand the environments in which they occurred. The typology allows the data set of UW cases to be cast into the four quadrants in order to more clearly differentiate the cases by type. The cases are differentiated by the nature and motivation of movement: either *revolutionary* or *resistance*. Secondly, the typology categorizes the cases by the degree of indigenous genesis, contrasting *organic inception* to

external synthesis. By identifying the difference, researchers can better understand the role of the sponsor (U.S.) and its relationship with the movement²⁶ The value in viewing historic cases in this perspective allows comparative analysis between historic cases or between historic cases and current conditions in an emerging crisis. Finally, the methodology provides an ontological typology in which all cases of UW will fall in (see Figure 4). To proceed further, defining the poles of the axis is necessary.

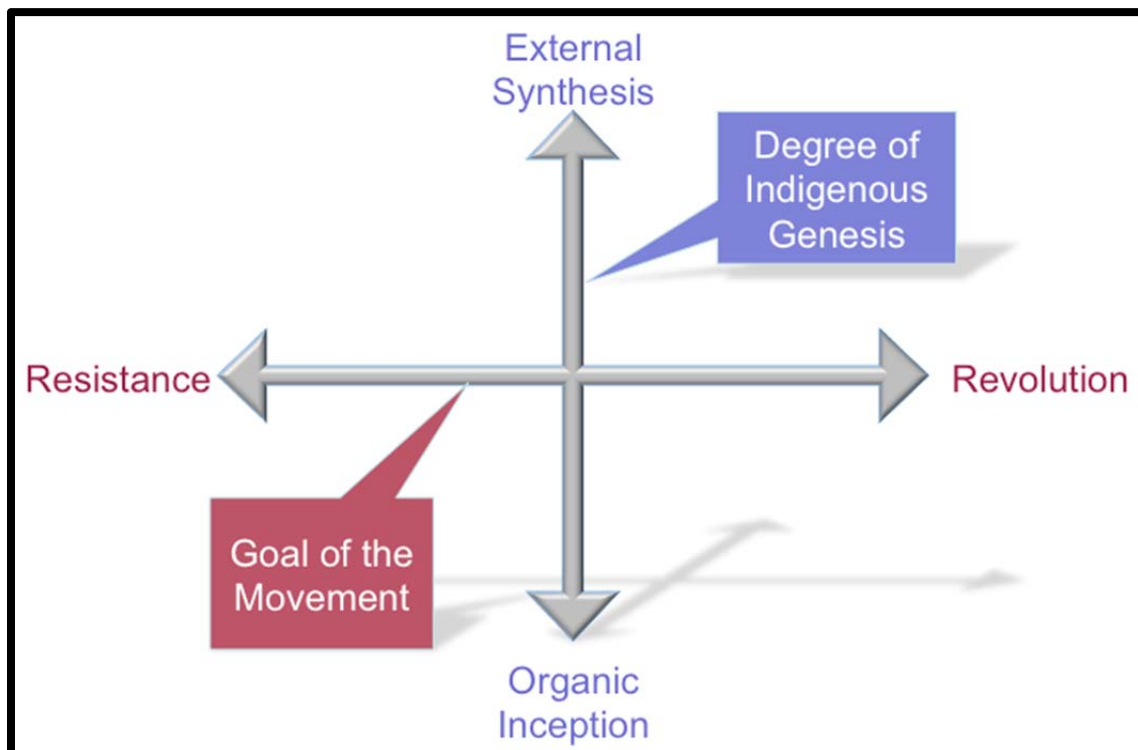


Figure 4. The Dynamic Typology of UW

²⁶ Another additional value of categorizing each case and placing it into the appropriate quadrant, several cases in this study, which were thought to be UW, were in fact identified as FID, or, in other cases the end dates were adjusted to reflect the completion of UW and the transition into FID. Department of Defense, *Foreign Internal Defense*, Joint Publication 3-22 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, July 12, 2010).

1. Revolution Versus Resistance

While Revolution and Resistance are often used interchangeably, this study will differentiate the two based on the nature of the *movement*.²⁷ *Revolution* can be defined as social disequilibrium manifesting into a catalyst that forms the nucleus of the movement as *internal causation*. These types of movements express themselves through, but are not limited to, political activism and subversion, coups d'état, and armed conflict. If the problem originates internally, as a result of poor leadership, bad politics, or the failure to adapt to a new paradigm, this study categorizes the movement as simply "revolution." *Resistance* is the opposite of revolution. This type of movement occurs as a result of an invading external force. Therefore, a movement reacted, or manifested as resistance. The resistance can formulate as a nation as a whole or by a small group or band. However, key to the nature of resistance, the source of the problem is typically derived by an *outside* force or organization.²⁸

2. Organic Inception versus External Synthesis

Organic movements are hatched and executed from within the territory or country. This speaks to self-organization and leadership, as opposed to being convinced or coerced by an outside entity to mobilize. Foreign sponsorship may result due to common interest. Organic movements are not always void of external support or influence. The common adage of "my enemy's enemy is my friend" dovetails nicely with organic movements and the modus operandi of external supporters with common interests with a movement. Once the goal of

²⁷ Throughout this work the *movement* is used to reference any organization that engages in revolutionary or resistance activity. Movements include, but are not limited to, social movements that conduct political activism and subversion, networks of military officers or government officials that conduct coups d'états, bands of partisans or insurgents that have escalated activity to armed conflict, terrorism, guerilla warfare. Movements, in this work, will include U.S. Army UW doctrinally labeled organizations that fill the role of the *auxiliary*, *underground*, and *guerilla* force.

²⁸ In *Resistance*, as a stand-alone methodology, or in support of conventional warfare, UW is used to disrupt or attrite the effects or will of an invading force. A great example is the partisan operations of World War II. If a country is faced with an invading force, beyond the capacity of its military to defend itself, the government may utilize UW to force the invader to withdraw. Although strategically, UW is used to defend the sovereignty of the country being invaded, operationally and tactically, the movement conducting UW will be on the offensive.

the movement has been explored, in terms of motivation and initiative, the movement's degree of *indigenous genesis* will identify the source of leadership, planning, and organization.

Outsiders, motivating potential participants and leaders alike through the support of material, political, or monetary aid can initiate formation of movements. When such promise, coercion, or influence occurs, a movement is pushed into action by *external synthesis*. "Synthetic" movements would never have "gotten off the ground" without critical support, leadership, or organization provided by an outside entity.

However, conditions must be present in the environment that will nurture the movement and allow for popular support or local buy-in to occur. One could not synthesize a movement in utopia; no one living under such conditions would risk their contentedness and security, nor would there be a sufficient cause to counter effective governance. The risks that accompany mobilization must be outweighed by the rewards of potential gain and the likelihood of success.²⁹ Relating back to the adage of the organic movement's "my enemy's enemy," a synthetic movement is a result of convincing my friend that my enemy is his enemy.

E. UW CASE SELECTION

Of the 37 cases of U.S.-sponsored UW occurring in the Cold War, four have been selected for further analysis. A case was selected from each of the quadrants: Externally Synthesized Revolution, Organic Revolution, Organic Resistance, and Externally Synthesized Resistance. The Dynamic Typology of

²⁹ Author Eric Hoffer posits in *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*, that "for men to plunge headlong into an undertaking of vast change, they must be intensely discontented yet not destitute, and they must have the feeling that...they have access to a source of irresistible power. They must also have an extravagant conception of the prospects and potentialities of the future. Finally, they must be wholly ignorant of the difficulties involved in their vast undertaking." Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 1951), 11.

UW Model was used again, not as a vetting tool or to gain further understanding of a specific case, but to balance case selection from amongst the larger field.

Aside from motivation and composition of leadership, the four cases are representative of different regions of the world. The cases selected took place on the continents of Asia, the Middle East, and Central America. Finally, the cases represented different timeframes within the Cold War period. The Cold War period lasted roughly 45 years. Cases were selected from different timeframes within the period to balance between the earlier days of parity through the final days before the collapse of the USSR.

The UW cases selected are those conducted in Iran during 1953, Tibet from 1957–74, Laos from 1957–73, and Nicaragua from 1981–90 (see Figure 5).

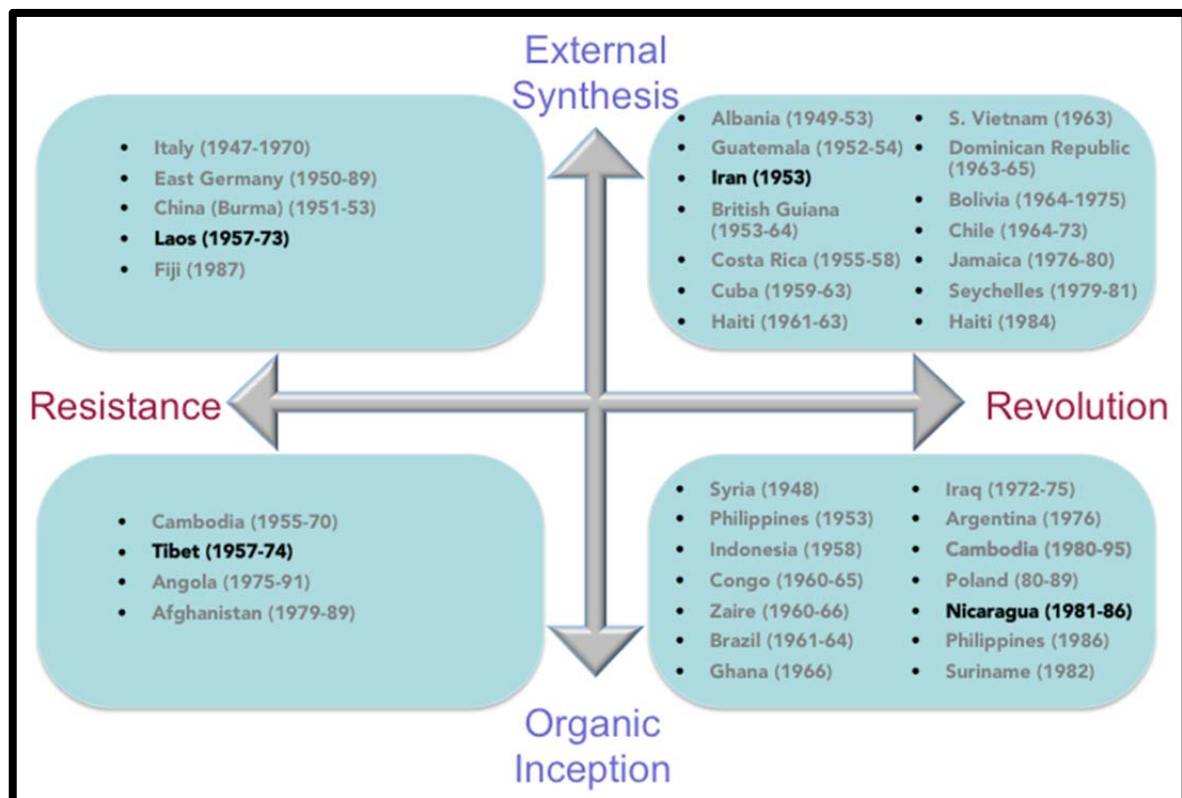


Figure 5. Cold War Cases plotted on the Dynamic Typology of UW

F. NEGATIVE CASE SELECTION

Likely there are a multitude of options that U.S. decision makers could undertake in order to achieve foreign policy. For the sake of this work, a generalization will be made that there are three grand strategy options at the decision point prior to any warfare campaign: Conduct unconventional warfare, conduct conventional warfare, or do not conduct warfare. Selecting a negative case was necessary to understand factors that led to deciding for a “non-UW option.” By following the “Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research,” posited by Mahoney and Goertz, identifying and analyzing a plausible case in which UW was not conducted, but could have been, was necessary to balance this work.³⁰ Goertz and Mahoney challenge researchers to look for the line between plausible and implausible negative events.

As such, identifying the factors that led decision makers to choose unconventional warfare over conventional, or the opposite, is what this study is trying to achieve. Therefore, conventional warfare is one way to look for plausible negative cases of UW. Finding cases representative of the third option in the above decision point is a challenge. Surely scenarios have played out in this manner, however, these cases are likely less similar to cases in which the first two options are decided upon. Rather, the road that leads to intervention or confrontation is derivative of a decision to embark on warfare. There may be plausible negative cases of UW that end up in peace, but these are much more difficult to establish ex post.

According to “Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798–2009” *Congressional Research Service*, there are 54 cases of use of U.S.

³⁰ Gary Goertz and James Mahoney, “Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98, No. 4 (2004)

military forces abroad during the Cold War (1945–1991).³¹ Of those 54, 13 cases are conventional warfare ranging from declared war to precision strikes, colored red (see Figure 6). The challenge was to identify a conventional campaign that did not have UW in a supporting role. This eliminated the Korean War, Vietnam, and Desert Storm, these all having partisan or guerilla operations in support of the conventional operations (United Nations Partisan Infantry Korea, aka White Tigers during the Korean War³²; Projects SIGMA, OMEGA, and the Phoenix programs during the Vietnam War³³; and Kuwaiti Resistance Forces during Desert Storm³⁴).

31 U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *Instances of Use of U.S. Armed Forces Abroad, 1798–2009*, by Richard Grimmett, CRS Report RL32170 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, 2010), <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rl32170.pdf> (accessed on 18 November 2012).

32 Ben S. Malcom, *White Tigers: My Secret War in North Korea* (Washington D.C.: Brassey's Inc., 2003).

33 James E. Acre, *Project Omega: Eye of the Beast* (Ashland, OR: Hellgate Press, 1999); John L. Plaster, *SOG: The Secret Wars of America's Commandos in Vietnam*, (New York: New American Library, 1998); Shelby L. Stanton, *Special Forces at War: An Illustrated History, Southeast Asia 1957–1975*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zenith Press, 2008).

34 John M. Levins, "The Kuwaiti Resistance" *Middle East Quarterly* □ March (1995), 25–36, <http://www.meforum.org/238/the-kuwaiti-resistance> (accessed 26 October 2012).

Case	Start	End	Case	Start	End
China	1945	1945	Iran	1980	1980
Trieste	1946	1946	El Salvador	1981	1981
Palestine	1948	1948	Libya	1981	1981
Berlin	1948	1948	Sinai	1982	1982
China	1948	1949	Lebanon	1982	1982
Korean War	1950	1953	Lebanon	1982	1983
Formosa (Taiwan)	1950	1955	Egypt	1983	1983
China	1954	1955	Honduras	1983	1989
Egypt	1956	1956	Chad	1983	1983
Lebanon	1958	1958	Grenada	1983	1983
The Caribbean	1959	1960	Persian Gulf	1984	1984
Thailand	1962	1962	Italy	1985	1985
Cuba	1962	1962	Libya	1986	1986
Laos	1962	1975	Libya	1986	1986
Congo	1964	1964	Bolivia	1986	1986
Vietnam War	1964	1973	Persian Gulf	1987	1988
Dom. Republic	1965	1965	Panama	1988	1988
Congo	1967	1967	Libya	1989	1989
Cambodia	1970	1970	Panama	1989	1989
Cypruss	1974	1974	Andean Init. (WOD)	1989	1989
Vietnam	1975	1975	Philippines	1989	1989
Cambodia	1975	1975	Panama	1989	1990
South Vietnam	1975	1975	Liberia	1990	1990
Mayaguez Incident	1975	1975	Saudi Arabia	1990	1990
Lebanon	1976	1976	Iraq	1991	1991
Korea	1976	1976	Iraq	1991	1991
Zaire	1978	1978	Zaire	1991	1991

Figure 6. “Instances of Use of U.S. Armed Forces Abroad,”
During the Cold War

G. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN UW CASES AND NON-CASE

Ideally, each case study of UW would be matched with a comparable non-case of UW. The result would be four cases (one from each quadrant of the UW Model) and four non-cases, totaling eight qualitative case studies. However, the field of non-UW cases with no supporting UW campaign is limited. In the observation of non-cases of UW during the Cold War, the challenge of identifying non-cases to compare to cases of UW was limited by non-cases having no tie to a UW campaign during the conventional campaign. This limited the field of potential non-UW cases

After examining the remainder of the conflicts, Operation JUST CAUSE appeared an ideal non-UW case. Not only did Panama’s conventional operation

hinge on mass mobilization, deployment, maneuver, and overwhelming firepower, a classic vignette of U.S. military tactics resulting from its dominance, it had no UW campaign supporting the conventional operation.

The next chapter will begin the case studies, starting with TP AJAX in Iran. The fifth and final case study will be Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama, a non-UW case. Each of the case study chapters will provide further explanation for case selection, a synopsis, and an analysis of the decision point and variables that enabled or constrained the decision to conduct operations. The final chapters will be a comparison of all variables to induce the factors that lead to U.S. unconventional warfare and recommendations for UW stakeholders from the findings.

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III. CASE STUDIES

A. CASE I: IRAN–1953³⁵

1. Introduction

The unconventional warfare operation to replace Mohammed Mossadegh and appoint General Fazlollah Zahedi as the Prime Minister of Iran under the Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi represents an example of a *Synthetic-Revolution*, as defined by the dynamic typology of UW developed in Chapter II. External actors, namely the UK and U.S., orchestrated the revolutionary *coup d'état* from start to finish.³⁶ The operation, thought to be the first successful

35 While this case is dated 1953 the year the coup was executed, the network development started in 1947–1948 with TP BEDAMN, the networks value to the success the coup is of less importance to this research than identifying it was a contributing factor that allowed elements of the plan to be feasible to the decision makers thus contributing to the approval of UW as a valid course of action.

36 One of the most definitive accounts of the 1953 coup is the history written by Dr. Donald N. Wilber who was one of the leading CIA planners of the coup. Other sources use this account as the corner stone of research into the operation. While an excellent primary source Wilber's account does not cite additional sources or go into detail on much of the backstory or context as well as some later researchers that built on his material and also referenced additional primary source accounts. See Donald N. Wilber, *Clandestine Service History: Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran*, November 1952–August 1953, March 1954. A summary of Wilber's declassified account was published in James Risen "How a Plot Convulsed Iran in '53 (and in '79)," *New York Times*, April 16, 2000. 1, 16, 17. Currently one of the most well researched accounts of the coup, comes from a professor of political scientist from Louisiana State University, Mark Gasiorowski "The 1953 Coup d'État in Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 19, (1987), 261–286; another primary source, although considered biased toward the official narrative is Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1979); Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken, NJ: Jon Wiley and Sons, 2008) a chapter overview is covered by John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars*, Revised and Expanded Edition, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1986), 91–98.

“regime change” run by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA),³⁷ made use of in-place clandestine networks for propaganda and political destabilization through *agents provocateurs*,³⁸ relationships between U.S. and Iranian military officers, secret royal decrees, a princess, and a king all carried out by the grandson of President Theodor Roosevelt, with the father of U.S. General Norman Schwarzkopf, and the founder of U.S. Army Special Forces and PSYOPs both playing a role.

The operation in Iran reflects a time period at the beginning of the Cold War. The existential battle between democracy and communism was just stirring as the world began to shake off the last remnants of the Colonial Era and recover from World War II.³⁹

2. Background

Since the 18th century, Persia had been a part of the strategic conflict

37 What current SF doctrine defines as a unconventional warfare “overthrow” campaign, see definition in Chapter I, and TC 18–01 *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*, November 2010, 1–1 also John Perkins was one of the first to propose that Iran was the first *successful* CIA coup in his book *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* (San Francisco, CA.: Berrett-Koehler, 2004). While the majority of the research into early Cold War CIA operations supports this claim, several others dispute it claiming that CIA operations in Syria ousting President, Shukri al-Kuwatli, predate TP AJAX by several years. Joseph Massad, a professor of Modern Arab Politics and Intellectual History at Columbia University, and other historians including Douglas Little, Professor, Department of History, Clark University, agree based on primary source interviews and declassified CIA records. Irene Gendzier, states that “Known CIA agents Miles Copeland and Stephen Meade were directly involved in the Syria coup of 1947.” While in fact the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC) an organization that bridged the end of the OSS and the formation of the CIA may have conducted the Syrian coup it is just a matter of semantics. See: Miles Copeland, *The Game Player: Confessions of the CIA’s Original Political Operative*, (London: Aurum Press Ltd, 1989) Irene Gendzier, *Notes from the Minefield: United States Intervention in Lebanon and the Middle East, 1945–1958*. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 98. And Douglas Little, 1949–1958, *Syria: Early Experiments in Covert Action*, from http://coat.ncf.ca/our_magazine/links/issue51/articles/51_12–13.pdf, (accessed on 06 November 2012).

38 French term meaning “inciting agent” generally, the term may refer to a person or group that seeks to discredit or harm another by provoking them to commit a wrong or rash action.

39 Donald N. Wilber, Declassified CIA Historical Paper No. 208 Clandestine Service History: *Overthrow Of Premier Mossadegh Of Iran November 1952 – August 1953* Archived from the original on 8 June 2009, (accessed on 06 November 2012).

known as the *Great Game*.⁴⁰ This was the original *Cold War* between the British Empire and the Russian Empire, who competed for influence of the region, which included Central Asia, the Himalayas, Afghanistan, the Caucasus, and Persia. At the turn of the 20th century, Persia was one square on the chessboard where the two powers, vied for position, Russia in the north and Britain in the south.⁴¹ In the early 20th century, after the British discovered oil in Persia, petroleum assumed an important role in the great power rivalry. The practice of the Persian ruling class was to sell concession rights to both of the powers, playing them against each other while making themselves rich. As anti-colonial nationalism began to take hold of the region this practice upset the Persian people who felt their rulers were selling them out for their own interests. This led to a series of revolts and revolutions that lasted until World War I.

Persia hoped to avoid entanglement in World War I by declaring its neutrality, but ended up as a battleground for Russian, Turkish, and British troops. Germany believed that they could get ahead of the great powers by organizing and exploiting a unified Islam. Well schooled in unconventional warfare, the Germans sent their own version of *Lawrence of Arabia*, Wilhelm Wassmuss, to Persia train the southern tribes against the British. In response Britain created a local surrogate as well, the South Persia Rifles, to protect its interests.⁴² At the end of the war, because of Russia's preoccupation with its own

40 The "Great Game," describes the clandestine struggle between Russia and Britain for mastery of Central Asia, has long been regarded as one of the greatest geopolitical conflicts in history. Many believed that control of the vast Eurasian heartland was the key to world dominion. The original Great Game ended with the Russian Revolution, but the geopolitical struggles in Central Asia continue to the present day. See generally, Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York, NY: Kondansha America, 1992)

On 21 March 1935, Reza Shah Pahlavi changed the name of the country from Persia to Iran.

41 Ibid.

42 Christopher Sykes, *Wassmuss The German Lawrence*, (New York, NY: Longmans, Green and Co., 1936); Donald M. McKale, *War by Revolution: Germany and Great Britain in the Middle East in the Era*, (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2008), Spencer C. Tucker, *The Encyclopedia of World War I, A Political, Social and Military History Volume 1 (A-D)* ABC-Clio Inc. (2005), 583.

revolution, Britain became the dominant influence in Tehran.⁴³ Britain's continued exploitation of the oil fields began to create insurgents who demanded their rulers stand up for the Persian people. A former officer from the Persian Cossacks Brigade,⁴⁴ Reza Khan marched into Tehran and seized power in February 1921.⁴⁵ In 1925, he declared himself Reza *Shah* and adopted the reign name *Pahlavi*.⁴⁶ In 1935, Reza Shah instructed foreign embassies to call Persia by its ancient name, Iran, inaugurating a new phase in the country's modern history.

While the British Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) controlled Iran's oil resources, most of its technical assistance came from Germany. This created problems for Iran after 1939, when Germany and Britain became enemies in World War II.⁴⁷ Following the Germans, Britain and the Soviet Union invaded Iran and arrested and exiled the Shah because of his support for the Germans. In 1942, the U.S. established two military missions to balance the British and Russian presence. Brigadier General H. Norman Schwarzkopf was sent to Tehran by President Theodore Roosevelt to take the lead as the military advisor to the *Gendarmerie* Mission. General Schwarzkopf was famous in Iran due to his

43 The Bolshevik Revolution, specifically the Red Russian fear that exiled White Russians would utilize Iranian sanctuary and continue harassment of the newly consolidating Soviet Union, led to the signing of the 1921 Russo-Persian Friendship Treaty. Article 5 and 6 of the treaty allowed Soviets to, essentially, deploy forces into Iranian territory to eradicate any threat. The treaty also gave the Soviets rights to intervene if *any* third party military mobilized in Iran, threatening Iranian or Soviet sovereignty. See Mehdiyou, Kamyar. "Ownership of Oil and Gas Resources in the Caspian Sea." *The American Journal of International Law*. Vol. 94, No. 1 (January 2000).

44 Persian partisan Cavalry unit stood up and trained by Russian military advisors to fight the British in the Great Game 1917. Sir Percy Molesworth Sykes, *A History of Persia, Volume 2*, (Charleston SC: Nabu Press, 2011), 478.

45 The Russo-Iranian Friendship Treaty was signed shortly after Reza Shah took power on 26 February 1921. While the treaty seemed to be in Iran's favor, *article 6* had a sinister clause giving the Soviets right to introduce troops on to Iran's territory in case of necessity for self-defense. Years later, in 1941 the Russians chose to interpret this article as the right to unlimited military intervention. Mehdiyou, Kamyar. "Ownership of Oil and Gas Resources in the Caspian Sea." *The American Journal of International Law*. Vol. 94, No. 1 (January 2000), 179–189.

46 Shah or Shahanshah ("King of Kings") was the title of Persian and Indian emperors or kings. See William R. Polk, *Understanding Iran*, (New York, NY: St. Martins Press, 2009), 103.

47 Britain demanded that Iran expel all German citizens as spies, but Reza Shah refused.

dedication and professionalism in building the Gendarmerie and leading them in the battle of Azerbaijan in December 1946 against the Soviets.⁴⁸

In order to avoid the insurgencies that plagued occupation in the past, the U.S. and Britain supported Reza Shah's son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, to assume the throne as the new Shah. Widely viewed as a British puppet, the new Shah supported the existing trade agreements keeping in place the British concessions for oil, and refused to nationalize the AIOC. Large demonstrations against the Shah and to the British ensued and a pro-nationalist organization to form, called the National Front Party, or *Jebhe Melli*. It was formed as the voice of the opposition. In 1949 Iran had elections for the 16th Parliament or *Majlis*, the oil rights renegotiations and popular support for nationalization were leading issues. The National Front Party, led by European-educated lawyer and former Member of Parliament, Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh, emerged as a dominant power in the Majlis. Mossadegh authored a bill, which the Majlis passed, establishing that there would be no concessions and demanding that the AIOC be renegotiated.

As the British influence in Iran began to wane, the U.S. stepped up its own efforts in the *Great Game* against the Soviet threat, utilizing the neighboring country of Iran. In 1947 and 1948, the U.S. embassy staff grew considerably in size, enhancing diplomatic, commercial and cultural interactions between the two nations. More importantly, because of the long border with the Soviet Union, Iran became a greater post war U.S. interest for espionage and other covert activities. These covert operations included cross border intelligence gathering using recruited Azerbaijanis, Armenians, and other ethnic groups living on both sides of the border. As well as the development of *escape and evasion* routes and organization of "stay-behind" guerrilla networks from the Amini and Qashqai

⁴⁸*Azerbaijan People's Government*, a puppet government set up by the Soviets declared northern Iran as a separate Azerbaijan state backed by Soviet forces. The issue of Iranian Azerbaijan became one of the opening skirmishes of the Cold War, and, largely under the Western powers' pressure, Soviet forces withdrew in 1946. Louise L'Estrange Fawcett. *Iran and the Cold War: The Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 177–178.

tribes in southern Iran to conduct guerrilla warfare in the event of a Soviet invasion. One network designed for use against the Soviets that would become key to the coup was codenamed TP BEDAMN.⁴⁹ The TP BEDAMN network had two operational arms, one for *propaganda*, and one for *political action*.⁵⁰ The propaganda arm enflamed anti-communist sentiment spreading rumors and leaflets as well as publishing articles and cartoons in Iranian newspapers. The political action arm carried out attacks on communist's supporters by hiring criminal street gangs to break up communist meetings and funding anti-communist organizations. They also used false flag, or "black operations," such activities as the infiltration of *agent provocateurs* into communist demonstrations to incite violence, the bombing of mosques, and attacks on public figures, all while posing as members of the Communist Party.⁵¹

The gradual reemergence of the Tudeh communist party, growing unrest caused by the oil dispute with the British, and a severe recession within Iran due to economic sanctions led U.S. policymakers to become increasingly concerned about Iran. By 1951, the British failure to negotiate oil concessions led to wide spread Iranian sentiment for nationalization. Newly appointed Prime Minister general Ali Razmara who was against nationalization was assassinated in March 1951 by a member of the militant Fedayan-e Islam. The Shah's leadership was publically questioned. Iran was described as "dangerous and explosive," and a possible "second China." Because of this unrest the Shah begrudgingly

49 TP BEDAMN a counter Soviet network was developed by Roger Goiran the station Chief in Tehran for years prior to the coup. According to the declassified reports Joe Goodwin replaced Goiran as station Chief a few weeks before the coup. Several sources report this was due to Dulles relieving Goiran because of his opposition to the operation. Additionally, cryptonym's are code words used to reference projects, operations, persons, agencies, etc. Each contains a two-character prefix called a digraph, which designates a geographical or functional area. This network is alternately referred to Operation BEDAMN without the TP digraph or TP/BEDAMN depending on the source. See Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*. 164. and others.

50 *Propaganda and Political Action* is the terms used in source material for the networks mission design, however current military terms would likely define the two as Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) and Pseudo Operations (Pseudo-ops).

51 *False Flag operations* are deception operations designed to deceive in such a way that the operations appear as though they are being carried out by other entities. The name is derived from the military concept of flying false colors; that is: flying the flag of a country other than one's own.

appointed Mossadegh to replace Razmara as Prime Minister in April 1951.⁵² Mossadegh's first task was carrying out the recent law that nationalized Iran's oil industry. Britain protested, and began political and subversion efforts to remove Mossadegh from power. After the nationalization law was enacted, the Truman administration pursued two main goals regarding Iran. First, Iran was to remain a Western allied nation. Its location was too strategic to allow the Soviets to invade due to British involvement. Second, the world oil market vital to the British and U.S., had to remain stable. U.S. policy towards Iran was to support the Mossadegh's government and convince the British to end the oil dispute through diplomacy. The British continued to attempt every means to get rid of Mossadegh stopping short of a conventional invasion only after the U.S. insisted they would not support it. The U.S. feared a British military action would spark a Soviet response; the region could quickly become battlefield for World War III. Instead the British, well schooled in the *game*, began to incite friction among the leaders of the National Front through agents that the Special Intelligence Service (SIS) recruited for their own networks. Asadollah Rashidian; was a key asset in the SIS network who would later play a key role in the coup.⁵³

After a failed British-sponsored uprising, in which at least 69 people were killed and 750 were injured,⁵⁴ Mossadegh broke diplomatic relations with Britain. On 1 November 1952, the British embassy closed in Tehran, ending the era of British dominance in Iran. Although they were on the way out, the British still maintained many developed intelligence assets in Tehran. British SIS had drawn up plans to take Mossadegh out, and now suggested that the U.S. continue with

⁵² Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne, *Mohammad Mossadegh and the 1953 Coup in Iran, Modern Intellectual and Political History of the Middle East* (New York, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 267.

⁵³ Asadollah Rashidian and his two brothers (Seyfollah and Qodratollah) had important contacts in Iranian society (including the armed forces, the Majlis, and the press). They helped the CIA during the coup and were a communication link to the Shah after the coup. Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*. 159,160,199,211.

⁵⁴ Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne, *Mohammad Mossadegh and the 1953 Coup in Iran, Modern Intellectual and Political History of the Middle East* (New York, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004).

them. In order to help facilitate the plan, the Rashidian network and several local assets were passed over to the CIA.⁵⁵ The new U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower and the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill finally agreed to work together toward Mossadegh's removal. In March 1953, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles directed the CIA, which was headed by his younger brother Allen Dulles, to draft plans to overthrow Mossadegh. The CIA's plan, codenamed operation TP AJAX,⁵⁶ was to use a military coup to take out Mossadegh and install former General Fazlollah Zahedi as prime minister.⁵⁷ The plan was presented to CIA Director Allen W. Dulles, his brother and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson, and the U.S. Ambassador to Iran, Loy W. Henderson. Chief of CIA's Near East and Africa division, Kermit Roosevelt who was not only an OSS alumni, he was also the grandson of former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt presented the plan and would take the lead for the operation. Although not at the meeting himself, President Eisenhower later approved the plan. The SIS presented the plan separately to the British Foreign Office; approval came from the various offices by 11 July 1953.

With the plan approved, execution began within days. The TP BEDAMN assets prepared the environment with targeted propaganda and the political action arm began to selective attacks public figures that were known to be pro-Shah while claiming to be members of the National Party or Communist Tudeh supporters.⁵⁸ Criminal gangs, dissidents, and sports clubs were hired to be

55 Gasiorowski, ... 1953 Coup, 270.

56 The SIS kept the name of their original plan that was never executed Operation BOOT. The coup is known in Iran as the "28 Mordad Coup" which is the date on the Persian calendar. See Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, 163.

57 General Zahedi was the former Minister of the Interior under Mossadegh, but was relieved after being accused of fostering plans for a coup after the failed British sponsored uprising. His actual role in the previous British coup is argued by separate sources.

58 This practice of beginning UW campaign would become doctrine for Special Forces. *Propaganda or Psychological Operations* were considered *Phase 1* of the seven Phases of U.S. sponsored unconventional warfare. Department of Defense, *Psychological Operations*, Joint Publication 3-13.2 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, January 7, 2010), Section 1-5, 1-2.

protesters on demand. Police and military officers were paid off to allow the protesters to go unchecked as select Mullahs and members of the Majlis were paid to support them. The tension in the environment, helped set the conditions for the coup.⁵⁹

Once the propaganda and political action began to have effect and the country was close to chaos, the next step was for the Shah to come forward and issue two royal decrees or *firmans*, dismissing Dr. Mossadegh and appointing General Zahedi Prime Minister. These would be key in getting the Iranian Army to switch sides at the crucial moment. After numerous secret meetings over a period of days with everyone who held an influence on the Shah: his sister, Asadollah Rashidian, General Schwarzkopf, and Kermit Roosevelt, the Shah finally gave in and signed the decrees. On 15 August, the planned day of the coup, the political action arm drove Iran to the brink of chaos. The people, led by religious leaders, were demanding Mossadegh's resignation. Bought or loyal

⁵⁹ The military attaché worked closely with/for the CIA station and had developed relationships within the Iranian military and police. This relationship was much more common in the early Cold War, perhaps due to the closer relationship between CIA and State Department. Although it can not be confirmed in this case, it is well documented, and seen in this paper in following cases where the position of military attaché is little more than a cover for military officers assigned to the CIA.

police and military units, controlled by the military attaché Robert McClure⁶⁰, who provided over-watch and guided the mobs to promote the largest eruption of “spontaneous” crowds and riots possible. CIA paid rioters played on one side or the other to incite the crowd, thousands more joined in spontaneously. As planned, the capital was in chaos and Mossadegh’s control began to slip. This was meant to be the tipping point of the coup. However, Mossadegh was prepared and resisted arrest rallying forces still loyal to defend his position and secure the capital. The sun rose on the morning of 16 August to display a still smoldering capital, crushed but not entirely broken, with Mossadegh still very much in power. The Shah, fearing Mossadegh’s reaction to the decree’s and his role in the coup, fled the country with his wife.

As reports of the previous night’s activities got back to Washington the coup was deemed a failure. Washington sent a message to withdraw which did

60 It is perhaps no coincidence that Robert McClure was the military attaché assigned to Iran in 1952. While several accounts of TP AJAX list McClure simply as the *military attaché* and several acknowledge some of his participation in the aspects of the coup, no published material found by this research has made the connection to who McClure was or his previous military assignments. Several obscure military histories not related to TP AJAX have identified McClure as the driving force behind the establishment of U.S. Army Special Forces and Psyops but those few that do, fail to link him to the operation in Iran. Because their focus was on his development of SF and PSYOPs they seem to miss this important link. Several other sources mention after his work establishing SF he was assigned to Iran, but again no link to the coup made. Based on exhaustive research, it is believed that this paper is the first to make this historic connection. During Word War II, Robert McClure ran the Psychological Warfare Division (PWD) manned by officers from U.S. Office of War Information (OWI), the U.S. OSS, and the British PWE. After Korea McClure stood up the Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare in Washington, the Psychological Warfare Center at Ft. Bragg, and the 10th Special Forces Group. McClure recruited officers with World War II or Korean War experience in unconventional warfare to man the unit including: COL Aaron Bank, LTC Russell Volckmann, and CPT Donald Blackburn. Bank had been assigned to the OSS and fought with the French Maquis. Volckmann and Blackburn had both been guerillas in the Philippines, and Volckmann had also led UW operations in Korea. Bank would be later credited as the father of SF because McClure chose him to be the first commander. Blackburn would be the SF Group commander in charge of OP WHITE STAR in Laos, see Chapter III - C. See, Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins: Revised Edition* (Lawrence Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2002), Aaron Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets the Birth of Special Forces* (New York, NY: Presidio Press, 1986), Mike Guardia, *American Guerrilla: The Forgotten Heroics of Russell W. Volckmann*, (Philadelphia, PA: Casemate Pub, 2010), and Mike Guardia, *Shadow Commander: The Epic Story of Donald D. Blackburn-Guerrilla Leader and Special Forces Hero*, (Philadelphia, PA: Casemate Pub, 2011). Primary source identifying this is the same McClure can be found in the *Presidential Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, courtesy of the Johns Hopkins University Press, Document #814; (April 2, 1954) online at: <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/presidential-papers/first-term/documents/814.cfm>, (assessed 15 November 2012).

not reach Roosevelt for another two days. Roosevelt unaware of the orders decided to try to the plan a second time. In order to get the military on board for the next attempt, Roosevelt sent the military attaché McClure to the Iranian Army units, one by one, speaking to each commander and showing them a copy of the decree. If the Shah's decrees did not convince them to join, he offered them payoffs.⁶¹ Roosevelt also had copies of the decrees published in local and international newspapers and had them read over local radio. For both recruiting the Army, and gaining popular support, it was the dissemination of the decrees that proved decisive.

The street protests, this time backed by pro-Shah army units, defeated the remainder of Mossadegh's forces. The Shah was brought back in country as the fighting died down, he would publically return. Mossadegh was arrested, tried and convicted of treason by the Shah's military court. On 21 December 1953, he was sentenced to three years in jail, after wards he spent the rest of his life under a liberal house arrest. The remainder of Mossadegh's supporters were rounded up, imprisoned, tortured or executed. Finally, and according to plan, General Zahedi was installed as prime minister.

In the end, TP AJAX became the blueprint for covert operations and unconventional warfare that would be utilized often throughout the Cold War. Similar methods were used in Guatemala in 1954, Syria in 1958, and Cuba in 1961.⁶² As a result, the newly created CIA was able to establish itself as a key

61 Kinzer's version of these events (171) have McClure a very strict military man who is easily angered and bothered to deal with the Iranian officers, however the declassified CIA documents written by Wilber say that Roosevelt directed McClure to "act angry" with the officers if they showed any loyalty to Mossadegh. While both versions describe the same events, in light of McClure's background in unconventional warfare and PSYOPs, that Kinzer did not identify, it is highly unlikely he was the caricature of a stiff military officer Kinzer portrays him as. Kinzer's source reference for that section is credited to the *New York Times* article whose source is credited as the declassified Wilber papers. See Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Jan 2, 2008) 171 also Donald N. Wilber, Declassified CIA Historical Paper No. 208 Clandestine Service History: *Overthrow Of Premier Mossadegh Of Iran November 1952 – August 1953* Archived from the original on 8 June 2009. (accessed 6 November 2012), 28.

62 Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne, *Mohammad Mossadegh and the 1953 Coup in Iran, Modern Intellectual and Political History of the Middle East*, (New York, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), xv.

U.S. foreign policy tool. These types of operations came to be regarded as a low-cost, low-risk way to change and shape the world in support of U.S. interests.⁶³

3. Analysis

The following sections of this chapter will highlight significant factors that were influential in the decision to embark on unconventional warfare operations in Iran in contrast to the other two general options of no military action, or conventional military action. These factors are categorized into internal enablers, external enablers, internal constraints, and external constraints.

Enablers are arguments for action, either oppose no military action, or support UW over conventional military action. *Constraints* are arguments for no action, or they argue for the use of conventional military action over UW. The *internal* domain is that which is driven by the U.S.. This is a function of popular opinion or support (important due to the U.S. status as a democracy), capability, capacity, or leadership. The *external* domain is that outside of the U.S.. This includes the “targeted country’s” internal activities and circumstance, world events and reaction, and, perhaps the most heavily weighted, peer competitors’ actions, capacity, and capability. When identifying constraints, the actions that are precluded will be listed, as well as an explanation of how the constraints *may* have been overcome.

a. Decision Point

To understand how the events, conditions, environment, and context influenced the decision makers and shaped their decision, it is necessary

63 Darioush Bayandor a former Iranian diplomat and official who worked for the government of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi argues in *Iran and the CIA: The Fall of Mossadegh Revisited* (Apr 13, 2010) that the CIA coup attempt TP AJAX failed and that a popular uprising, instigated by Shi’ite clerics in fear that Mossadegh was taking the nation toward religious indifference led to the street riots to return the Shah to power. While many researchers have been critical of the theory calling it revisionist, the *Economist* and *World Affairs* while doubtful still noted that “Bayandor’s skepticism is a useful antidote to Roosevelt’s self-aggrandizing, which some later writers have mimicked uncritically” See <http://www.economist.com/node/16103846> (accessed on 04 November 2012).

to identify the decision point. Ideally, a specific day and hour would emerge as that moment in time, and analysis could be made on all variables that affected that specific moment in time. However, more realistic is that a series of events result in a “ratcheting up” of activity that cumulatively results in UW. Therefore, a month or even a year will suffice as a period of time defined as *the* decision point in which analysis can help better understand the context in which a decision was made. The decision may not be as clear-cut and simple as beginning UW, or not. More likely, it is a decision, or a series of decisions that result in an increase of resources or activities, bringing the operation from intelligence gathering and preparation to a level above a threshold that evolves into a UW campaign.

Through the retrospective lens of case study, two points in time should mark an indication of a decision point. The pre-decision time, in which a steady state of intelligence collection, relationship building, and infrastructure development is occurring, and a second period of time, post-decision, that illustrates a marked increase in resources allocated from the sponsor (input), training, recruiting, organizing activity (throughput), and operations conducted that bring the movement closer towards their goal of coercion, overthrow, or disruption (output).

In the case of Iran in 1953, the decision point is quite transparent: it is captured by the approval of TP AJAX by both the U.S. and British governments. The pre-decision time period is marked by events, both internal and external, that show preparation and necessitate action. When British efforts to foment an uprising failed PM Mossadegh broke diplomatic ties with the UK, forcing the British to recall its diplomatic mission. This initiated a hand over of lead role with the requisite assets and agents from the SIS to the CIA. Ultimately, Secretary Dulles ordering the CIA to begin planning an overthrow campaign to remove Mossadegh initiated the campaign. As this was *externally synthesized*, no immediate external shaping events preceded the decision point. To the right of the decision point, events or activities that show increased throughput and/or

output indicate a decision had occurred. Since the methodology to effect change was the coup d'état, the final preparation and execution of the coup itself show both (see Figure 7).

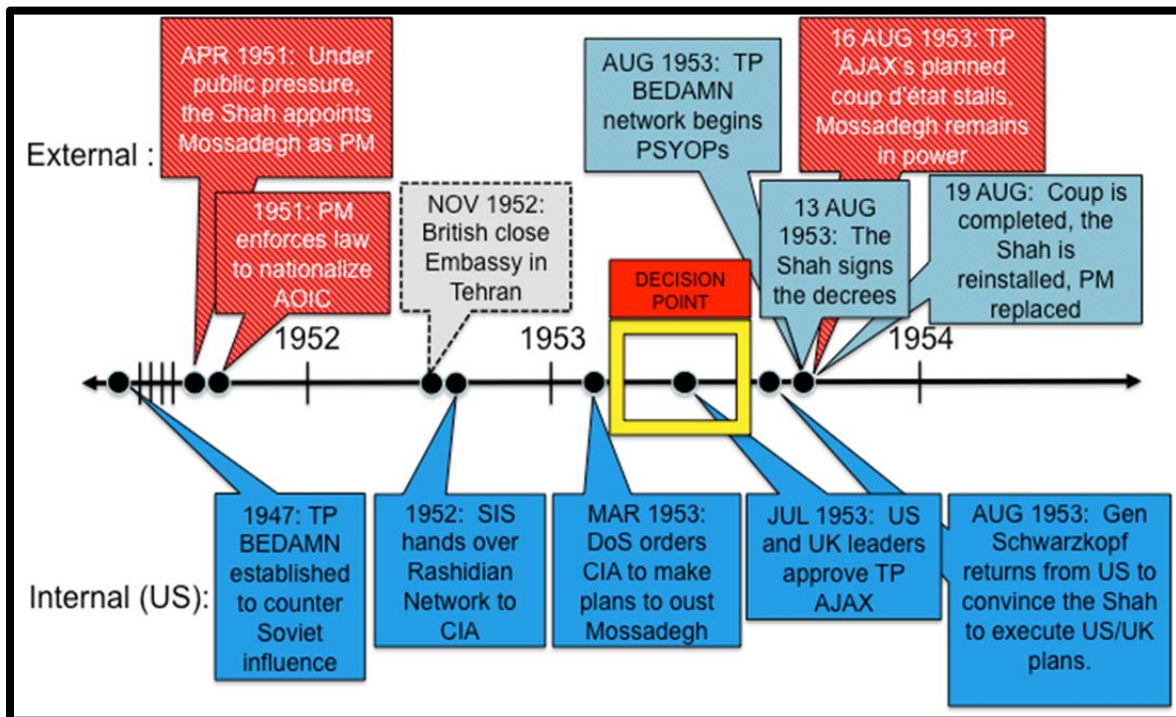


Figure 7. Decision Point Timeline for Iran

b. Internal Enablers

A Strategy Existed that Supported the Development of a Network. The Joint Chiefs of Staff tasked the newly formed Office of Policy Coordination with two missions to support the Defense Department's strategy for countering the expected Soviet military invasion of Europe. The first mission was to establish a network of "stay-behind" agents in Western Europe who would remain in place as Soviet forces attacked west. The second assignment was to organize and support resistance groups in Eastern Europe and Russia that could help retard the advance of attacking Soviet forces. With a clearly defined mission from the JCS and State Department advocating action, OPC began operations to

probe the Soviet perimeter.⁶⁴ This was the mission that allowed TP BEDAMN to establish anti-Soviet networks in Iran, which were essential to spreading propaganda and inciting the riots that shaped the environment for TP AJAX to succeed. If those mechanisms were not already in place it is doubtful the mission would have been approved.

The Operation had a Marketable Narrative. Eisenhower had made the Soviet threat a key issue in the 1952 elections, accusing the Democrats of being soft on communism and of having “lost China.” Once in power, the new administration quickly sought to put its views into practice: the State Department was purged of suspected communists, steps were taken to strengthen the Western alliance, and initiatives were begun to bolster the Western position in Latin America, the Middle East, and East Asia.⁶⁵ When the situation in Iran continued to sour Eisenhower viewed the issue in the same black and white terms of the Cold War, and even wrote to a friend that Iran looked as though China did “only a few years ago,” before it was lost to the communists.⁶⁶ These, combined, helped feed into the accepted narrative that demanded U.S. action to “counter communism.”

64 U.S. Congress, *Final Report*, 1: 147, and 2: 31–32. The Senate Select Committee, commonly referred to as the “Church Committee” after Senator Church, conducted an exhaustive investigation of all CIA covert activity since the inception of the Agency. Books one and four detail the rapid expansion of OPC its missions and roles.

65 Among the most prominent studies of escalation during the Cold War are Kahn, 1965; Bernard Brodie, *Escalation and the Nuclear Option*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966); Richard Smoke, *War: Controlling Escalation*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977); and Barry R. Posen, *Inadvertent Escalation: Conventional War and Nuclear Risks*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991).

However, escalation was a prominent concern in practically every analysis of nuclear strategy and deterrence. See Schelling 1960, 1966. For an overview of nuclear escalation issues, see Karl P. Mueller, “Strategic Airpower and Nuclear Strategy: New Theory for a Not-Quite-So- New Apocalypse,” in Phillip S. Meilinger, ed., *The Paths of Heaven: The Evolution of Airpower Theory*, (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 1997).

66 Moyara De Moraes Ruehsen, “Operation Ajax Revisited: Iran, 1953” *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.29 No.3, (London: Frank Cass Publishing, 1993) 467–486, From On-line excerpt <http://dcr.csusb.edu/dny/395/articles/Ruehsen%20-%20Operation%20Ajax.pdf>, (accessed 24 November 2012), 470.

New Decision Maker Inherits a Course of Action Leading to UW. The National Security Council gave approval, if not direction, for covert operations by issuing NSC 20 in August 1948. The directive described the ultimate objective of American foreign policy as “the overthrow of Soviet power.” The document provided recommendations for supporting anti-Communist resistance efforts, suggesting that the U.S. pursue a program of broad-based rather than selective support for resistance groups.⁶⁷ Later, the National Security Council organized the Dulles-Jackson-Correa committee to study CIA operations and the National Organization for Intelligence. The committee report, dated 1 January 1949, recommended the integration of CIA’s Office of Special Operations, the espionage function and the OPC’s, the covert operations function under a single Operations Division.⁶⁸ U.S. activity in Iran increased by 1952, a result of the posturing dictated by policy and organization as much as the external events occurring in Iran. Eisenhower replaced Truman in January of 1953. The actions by the British to start an uprising and PM Mossadegh’s reaction by cutting diplomatic ties, had already taken place. Eisenhower inherited the Iran situation, which by that time had already achieved significant momentum, set on a course dictated by Truman’s NSC through policy and organization.

A UW Experienced Organization Existed. Key personalities from the legacy of OSS, and the institutionalized knowledge that was handed down to the CIA, led to a UW experienced organization. Kermit Roosevelt, Allen Dulles, Wilbur, Goiran, McClure, and others were all veterans with service from the OSS and were either members of the CIA, or were in key positions to influence Eisenhower’s decisions. This shared background created a fraternity or network in which relationships and reputation facilitated planning and followed the institutionalized methodology favored by the OSS, which became an

67 Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis, *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945–1950*, (New York: Columbia University Press) 173–203. On-line excerpt of NSC 20/1 http://www.sakva.ru/Nick/NSC_20_1.html (accessed 15 November 2012).

68 William M. Leary, *The Central Intelligence Agency: History and Documents* (Tuscaloosa, AL.: University of Alabama Press, 1984), 132.

influence on selecting a methodology in which the end state in Iran could be achieved. The OSS legacy would have lasting effects on U.S. policy of intervention throughout the 20th century. More important, a network of trusted advisors with a background in UW would shape the decision maker's choices.

c. External Enablers

External Conditions Necessitated U.S. Action Based on an Interventionist Strategy. After World War II, Communism loomed as the challenge to U.S. interests. This threat began to intensify during the late 1940s with the Czechoslovakian coup, the Berlin Crisis, the fall of China, the Soviet development of nuclear arms, and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. Further, this led to the battle of ideology that became the Cold War. The Cold War was, according to historian and period expert John Gaddis, “a struggle for people’s minds as well as for their bodies and their possessions.”⁶⁹ The U.S. could not resort to isolation due to its need to protect the vitality of its own economy by expanding global markets and alliances and to deter the expansion of Soviet influence. Action was needed, but the challenge for the U.S. was to have a balanced approach in accomplishing objectives without forcing the Soviets into open war.

Conventional Strategic Options were Impractical. When the case of Iran is viewed in comparison with other events in the world impacting the U.S., it adds perspective on what may have shaped the decision to use UW over conventional warfare. In the context of the time, the most significant event internationally for the U.S. was the ongoing Korean War. While Kermit Roosevelt was planning the overthrow of Mossadegh, on the other side of the world the U.S. was engaged in one of the most heated battles of the Cold War. For

69 John Lewis Gaddis, “On Moral Equivalency and Cold War History,” *Ethics & International Affairs*, Volume 10 (1996). From website: <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/gaddis.htm> , (accessed 15 November 2012).

instance, *The Battle of Pork Chop Hill*,⁷⁰ the two separate battles in April and July of 1953.⁷¹ Together were the longest and most costly battles of the Korean War.⁷² Compared to the total end strength of the U.S. military, the Korean War accounted for the highest percentage of U.S. forces deployed at any one time in the Cold War.⁷³ As of 1953, the U.S. had suffered more than 33,741 killed in action. The war was at a low point in popularity at home in the U.S., and among allied nations. Korean War historians agree that the losses from numerous battles leading up to Pork Chop Hill and the effects of this major event were factors that led to the armistice being signed in July 1953.⁷⁴ There is no source specific material that relates the Korean War and its effect on U.S. popular support for another conventional war, or its effect on foreign policy, specifically to the coup in Iran. However, it would be an omission to not take into consideration the weight of the Korean War upon the decision makers. Two weeks before the Iranian coup commenced, President Eisenhower addressed the U.S. on the cost of the war during a public radio broadcast, “We have now gained a truce in Korea. We do not greet it with wild rejoicing. We know how dear its cost has

⁷⁰*Pork Chop Hill* was the nickname for a United Nations military outpost in the “Iron Triangle” sector of Korea along the 38th parallel. The hill, 255 meters in elevation, was officially designated “Hill 255,” but its contour lines on a map made it world famous as Pork Chop Hill.

⁷¹Walter G. Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front*, Volume 2 of *The United States Army in the Korean War*, (1966), Center of Military History, and also S.L.A. Marshall, *Pork Chop Hill: The American Fighting Man in Action, Korea, Spring 1953* (1956)

⁷²From the first battle U.S. casualties were 104 dead, including 63 in the 31st Infantry, 31 in the 17th Infantry and 10 among engineers and artillery observers, and 373 wounded. In the second battle four of the thirteen U.S. company commanders were killed. U.S. losses were 243 killed, 916 wounded, and nine captured. 163 of the dead were never recovered. Hermes, *Truce*; Marshall, *Pork Chop Hill*

⁷³Only 510 servicemen were based in South Korea in 1950, prior to the surprise attack from the North Koreans. Department of Defense (DoD) records show that in July of 1953 the troop strength rose to 326,863. All statistics on troop deployment of U.S. forces from 1950–2000 are available for researchers from this Heritage Foundation project website. Tim Kane, *Global U.S. Troop Deployment, 1950–2003* Heritage Foundation, (October 27, 2004) From:

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2004/10/global-us-troop-deployment-1950-2003> (accessed on 16 November 2012). Vietnam was the highest overall troop deployment during the Cold War (1968) but not the highest percentage.

⁷⁴Hermes, *Truce*; Marshall, *Pork Chop Hill*.

been in life and treasure.”⁷⁵ With the impact of the overall war, and losses from the recent battle hitting the American public within days of the decision point,⁷⁶ it is unlikely a conventional warfare option in Iran was ever much of an option.

Alliance and Treaty Commitments. Aside from the close ties resultant of the Russo-Iranian Friendship Treaty of 1921,⁷⁷ Soviet diplomats had drawn up several other treaties with neighboring countries that would, in effect, counter British influence. This stemmed from British support of the White Russians during the 1917–22 Bolshevik Revolution that would, despite UK and U.S. efforts, end with Lenin and the Red’s taking power. Although diplomacy between Iran and the Soviets continued, British influence took root in Iran, focused primarily on the AIOC and Iran’s oil fields. The British were sided with the U.S. against Communism, likely persuading U.S. intervention on behalf of their allies in Iran. When British actions failed to overthrow Mossadegh, they were left with only the option to use conventional military operations or to do nothing. The first option would not work for U.S. strategy, possible drawing them in to aid the UK in the likely war that would draw in the Soviets. The second option did little for the British. As the web of treaties and alliances coupled with diminishing options forced action, the U.S. was obliged to intervene. Similarly, the Soviets, unwilling to have the British or American militaries mobilizing in neighboring Iran, would likely intervene under the auspices of the 1921 Friendship Treaty.

Treaties Necessitated Action, Conditions Did Not Predicate Immediate Conventional Response. The U.S. had to prevent British escalation; the British potentially were about to use the 16th Parachute Brigade, recently sent to Cyprus, to secure their strategic interests, and had sent the

⁷⁵ Radio Report to the American People on the Achievements of the Administration and the 83d Congress (3 August 1953) From: http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/all_about_ike/quotes.html, (accessed on 16 November 2012).

⁷⁶ The meeting where final approval was given for TP AJAX, according to Kinzer’s account, clearly places the decision point as 24 June 1953, right in the middle of the two battles of Pork Chop Hill. See Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah’s Men*, 163.

⁷⁷ Mehdiyou, “Ownership of Oil and Gas,” 179–189.

battleship *HMS Mauritius* off of the Iranian coast, “menacingly close” to the oil facilities in Abadan.⁷⁸ After facing the loss of AIOC due to Iran’s nationalization, the economic losses would be staggering. British efforts to end Mossadegh’s rule by starting an uprising failed in 1952, ending with their embassy closing shortly after. With no embassy to provide access, their covert action capability was significantly limited. According to Gasiorowski and Byrne, the subsequent economic sanctions placed on Iran, coupled with the production slow down from AIOC, and the naval blockade prevented the export of oil and crushed the Iranian economy only to hasten confrontation.⁷⁹ Faced with either total loss or a military intervention, the British were left with few options. The U.S. prevented a British military invasion to preclude the likely confrontation between the Soviet Union and Britain. This left only one option, a UW campaign that would have to be conducted by the U.S. if it were to have any success (based on access inside of Iran via the U.S. Embassy).

Supporting the Development of Networks in the Steady State.

Military-to-Military relationships are the cash crop for synthetic coups. The CIA was able to capitalize on the knowledge and relationships the former military advisor to Iran, General Schwarzkopf, had cultivated during the pre-crisis period of time, also known as the “operational steady state.” This was especially key for approaching the Shah, who trusted the General’s advice and judgment. That level of trust is not built overnight; the relationship was a culmination of years of interaction and follow through.⁸⁰ While the mission may have been approved without that relationship, it was likely a key enabler to the overall success.

78 Moyara De Moraes Ruehsen, “Operation Ajax Revisited: Iran, 1953” *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.29 No.3, (London: Frank Cass Publishing, 1993) 467–486, From On-line excerpt <http://dcr.csusb.edu/dny/395/articles/Ruehsen%20-%20Operation%20Ajax.pdf>, (accessed 24 November 2012), 468.

79 Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne, *Mohammad Mossadegh and the 1953 Coup in Iran: Modern Intellectual and Political History of the Middle East* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 263.

80 General Norman Schwarzkopf worked in Iran in the Military Mission for six years from 1942 until 1948. Geoffrey Wawro, *Quicksand: America’s Pursuit of Power in the Middle East*, Penguin Books; Reprint edition (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2011), 97.

Additionally, the military attaché system, when used to support the CIA, gave planners insight to which commanders could be trusted and others who could be turned. This critical intelligence was used to develop an effective plan. The level of detail and viable intelligence were likely contributors to the approval to the plan.

d. Internal Constraints

Disagreement Within the CIA. Iran specialists in the State Department and the CIA station chief in Tehran were opposed to a coup; therefore this constrained the use of UW. Several CIA officers and State Department officials did not regard Mossadegh as a communist and the Tudeh was not believed to be capable of seizing power at this time.⁸¹ Rather, the Tudeh was thought to be pursuing a “popular front” strategy by infiltrating the army and the government bureaucracy and trying to gain favor with Mossadegh and other National Front leaders. Moreover, the Iranian economy had become relatively stable by this time, so a general collapse was not viewed as imminent. Despite the assessment that opposed the rationale for a coup, decision makers overcame this constraint, resulting in the resignation of the Tehran Station Chief Roger Goiran.⁸²

e. External Constraints

Small Prize. With more demanding issues around the world in Germany, Italy, Greece, and China, Korea, and Indochina, Iran was of little concern to the U.S. in the late 1940s. What strategic and economic interests the U.S. had in Iran were largely “covered” by the British. UK-U.S. strategic plans

81 Including Former Ambassador Charles Bohlen who supposedly went on an emotional tirade over the planned coup. See Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*. 164.

82 Supra note 18 above. Former OSS officer Roger Goiran was replaced or resigned as station Chief a few weeks before the coup. Several sources report this was because of Goiran's opposition to the operation. Kinzer's *Shah's Men* quotes Goiran as calling the operation a grave mistake of “Anglo-French colonialism” See Donald N. Wilber, *Clandestine Service History: Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran*, November 1952–August 1953, March 1954, Also Kinzer, *Shah's Men*...164

were for Britain to defend Iran in the event of a Soviet invasion.⁸³ This constrained the need for *any* action or intervention, as an ally of the U.S. could shape and influence matters to protect U.S. interests. However, this constraint was overcome with the ejection of the British diplomatic mission and access into Iran.

Intervention, Grounds for Escalation. U.S. or UK Military intervention would initiate the Russo-Persian Treaty of Friendship (1921), between the Soviet Union and Iran. Article 6 gave the Soviets rights to enter Iranian territory and intervene if “a third party should attempt to carry out a policy of usurpation by means of armed intervention in Persia.”⁸⁴ Covert operations led by UK or U.S. forces could lead to the same if discovered. This constrained *any* action on the grounds of initiating a hot war between the USSR and the U.S. This constraint was overcome when the policy changes in the UK and Iran left U.S. interests exposed, or unguarded. This was the impetus that led to increases in U.S. activity; ultimately to the approved plan to overthrow Mossadegh.

4. Summary

As in all of the cases of UW in this study, in Iran the enablers outweighed constraints resulting in a decision to conduct UW campaign. From the early approval and preparations of TP BEDAMN that provided an initial foundation to build upon, the relationships that grew from the military advisors that provided critical intelligence and feasibility in the plan, the growing *Anti-Communism Narrative* within the U.S. that proved easy justification to subvert socialist countries, alliances between the U.S. and UK and their stance against the Soviets, existing and new policy set by the U.S. Presidents, and the momentum of the situation in Iran that grew prior to Eisenhower’s inauguration were all decisive enablers. Internal conflicts between analysts and the CIA station in

⁸³ Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne, Mohammad Mossadegh and the 1953 Coup, 266–267

⁸⁴ Excerpts of the Russo-Persian Treaty of Friendship (1921), Article 6. Mehdiyou, Kamyar. “Ownership of Oil and Gas Resources in the Caspian Sea.” *The American Journal of International Law*. Vol. 94, No. 1 (January 2000), 179–189.

country, the initial small prize that Iran represented to the U.S., and the fear of intervention leading to escalation proved easy obstacles for TP AJAX planners to overcome. The nature of the *externally synthesized revolution* saw an absence in external shaping events that drove the timing of the movement's actions. The timing was by design alone. Furthermore, the importance of the existing infrastructure and networks for a *synthesized revolution*, demonstrated by TP BEDAMN and BG Schwarzkopf's mission in training the Gendarmerie, cannot be underscored enough.

The next case, the Tibetan *Organic-Resistance* against the People's Republic of China, was very different in terms of the movement, existing infrastructure and capacity, and role of external events. The difference in end states and methodology of both campaigns is dramatic: a coups d'état in Iran for the relatively quick overthrow, versus a long-term resistance to disrupt the Chinese Communists in Tibet. However, the same policies of Eisenhower's presidency, the organizations and personalities, and the external environment (in the global context) are all similar in both cases due to the proximity in history.

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B. CASE II. TIBET, 1956–1974⁸⁵

1. Introduction

The unconventional warfare campaign supporting Tibetan resistance fighters in their struggle against the occupation by the People's Republic of China (PRC) is a representation of the *Organic-Resistance* typology.⁸⁶ The Tibetan guerilla movement formed independently of the U.S. in response to hostile occupation by the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) invasion of their sovereign kingdom. While regime change or "overthrow" is the goal most associated with UW operations, the campaign in Tibet offers a case whose goal from the U.S. sponsor perspective, was disruption. Despite some opinions that the campaign was a failure on the part of the U.S., the operation was successful in what it intended to accomplish: disrupting the PLA, impacting the fledgling PRC economically, tying up a Chinese occupation force of up to 100,000 soldiers, forcing political concessions in the favor of U.S. interest, and creating an international awareness of China's aggression toward

⁸⁵ While this case is dated 1956–1974 it is inclusive of *all activities* associated with the operation. Determination of the *decision point*, when the operation was a committed UW campaign by current doctrinal definition versus activities that may have led to or supported the decision in the *steady state* is important to the analysis of the case because it allows the study to identify possible independent variables that have a link to causation. It should be understood that in no way does the *decision point* identified in the analysis portion of the chapter imply that there were no UW *related/supporting* activities that happened prior. Confusion occurs due to numerous sources listing different *start dates* for each operation, however, most of these dates indicate the start of any U.S. activity and do not filter activities that are planning, exploratory, preparatory or developmental in nature.

⁸⁶ See Chapter II

the sovereign nation of Tibet.⁸⁷ This operation took place relatively early during the Cold War and is framed by the U.S. war in Korea in the beginning and the war in Vietnam at the end.

2. Background

Tibetan independence and sovereignty has been disputed for the last two thousand years. Historically, Tibetans were a collection of several tribes spread out across the Himalaya's that collectively were generally recognized as part of the Tibetan empire. Protected through numerous dynasties, the Lama's of Tibet maintained a shaky independence through geographic separation and a priest-patron symbiosis with the various rulers of empires that came and went across the Central Asian highlands. This all changed in early 1949 when China's civil war ended with a clear victor and the People's Republic of China (PRC) began to make plans for a reconsolidation of China.⁸⁸ The PRC agreed with the former Kuomintang (KMT) nationalists on one issue; that Hainan, Taiwan, and Tibet all belonged under the regional hegemony of a united China.

The CIA began to see Tibet was key terrain in the post-World War II continuation of the *Great Game* and had established contacts in Tibet years prior to the Chinese invasion. CIA veteran John K. Knaus' book *Orphans of the Cold War: America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival* details a secret 1942 mission

⁸⁷ Many critics of the operation judge it a failure on the basis of that the U.S. was not successful in driving the PRC from Tibet, and the continued exposure of the plight due in part to the efforts of the Dalai Lama. While first hand accounts from CIA paramilitary team leaders in Operation ST CIRCUS, McCarthy and Knaus, show an unusual amount of affinity for the Tibetans and their cause, it was always understood, at least on the U.S. side that the U.S. interest was in disrupting the PRC through harassment operations. See generally, Roger E. McCarthy, *Tears Of The Lotus* (1997); Kenneth Conboy and James Morrison, *The Cia's Secret War In Tibet* (2011); Mikel Dunham, *Buddha's Warriors* (2004); Peter Hopkirk, *Trespassers On The Roof Of Heaven* (1995); John Kenneth Knaus, *Orphans Of The Cold War: America And The Tibetan Struggle For Survival* (2000); Thomas Laird, *Into Tibet: The Cia's First Atomic Spy And His Secret Expedition To Lhasa* (2003); Ritu Sarin And Tenzing Sonam, *The Shadow Circus: The Cia In Tibet* (1998). Numbers range from 20,000 to 100,000 depending on source material

⁸⁸ In 1949, China became a Communist country (officially the People's Republic of China) after Chinese Communist rebels defeated the Nationalist Republican government in the conclusion of the Chinese Civil War (1927~1949). Two Chinas were formed - mainland 'Communist China' (People's Republic of China) and 'Nationalist China' Taiwan (Republic of China).

to Lhasa, Tibet's capital, by members of the OSS, the CIA's forerunner.⁸⁹ Two U.S. Army officers, Major Ilia Tolstoy (grandson of Leo Tolstoy) and Captain Brooke Dolan II, established the first official contact between the Dalai Lama's government and Washington. Their expedition laid the groundwork for future U.S. involvement establishing contacts that would later prove valuable to the mission. In 1950, only three years after National Security Act of 1947 officially established the CIA, and months ahead of the Chinese invasion, Douglas Mackiernan was "shot dead on the borders of Tibet and Sinkiang." He was the first CIA officer to die in a covert operation.⁹⁰

Within a month of the May incursion into Kham, the other side of Asia grew hot as North Korean troops spilled into South Korea. The PRC launched an invasion with a goal to "liberate the Tibetan serfdom from the oppressive aristocracy." Looking to make up for losses in Korea, China ordered 20,000 of its troops to "realize the peaceful liberation of Tibet."⁹¹ The Tibetans offered little resistance; their small unorganized and undertrained army was woefully unprepared to protect the vast borders of the Tibetan frontier that reached from India in the south to just shy of Mongolia to the north.

Two groups of emissaries representing Tibet's interests were sent to Beijing in an attempt to appeal to peace and bring an end to the violence.

89 John K. Knaus, *Orphans of the Cold War: America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival*, (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2000)

90 The National Security Act of 1947, <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2008-featured-story-archive/national-security-act-of-1947.html> (accessed 06 November 2012).

Thomas Laird, *Into Tibet: The CIA's First Atomic Spy and His Secret Expedition to Lhasa*, Grove Press; 1 edition (2002). While officially denied for more than fifty years, first admitted publically on September 16, 2008, CIA Director Michael Hayden confirmed that Douglas Mackiernan was a CIA officer. (Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/speeches-testimony-archive-2008/directors-remarks-at-lawac.html>, (accessed 22 October 2012).

91 "The peaceful liberation of Tibet was an important part of the cause of the Chinese people's liberation, a great event in the Chinese nation's struggle against imperialist invasion to safeguard national unity and sovereignty, an epoch-making turning point in the social development history of Tibet, and a milestone marking the commencement of Tibet's progress from a dark and backward society to a bright and advanced future." From China's Government Official Web Portal, http://english.gov.cn/official/2011-07/11/content_1904075.htm, (accessed 20 October 2012).

Reportedly unauthorized by the Dalai Lama, they were coerced by the communists to sign a seventeen-point agreement that the Chinese called the “Plan for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet” which virtually wiped out any prospect of an autonomous Tibetan identity.⁹² The Dalai Lama traveled to Beijing in an attempt to build awareness of their cause, he still maintained the hope that China would allow Tibet to remain as it was. Hopeful to find a *middle path*, the Tibetan Ruler visited Beijing and was ceremonially treated with respect while being paraded around and put on display. On the last day of his visit, Chairman Mao, who reportedly took a liking to the young lama, confided in him that a belief in religion was akin to poison.⁹³ As the religious leader of his people, and as a person whose life devotion was in following the path he was born into, this comment brought forth a lightning bolt of realization to the young Lama: there would be no compromise with China until Tibet was gone.

The armed resistance, separate from the Dalai Lama’s attempts to broker peace with China, began as a series of independent uprisings in the eastern region of Kham. A widespread popular revolt finally broke out in February 1956 after the PLA attacked numerous ancient Buddhist monasteries and killed thousands of monks and civilians. Within a few years of China’s occupation, an organized militia dedicated to expelling the PLA began to form and soon found CIA support.

The prospect of supporting the Tibetans as part of a global anti-Communist campaign appealed to U.S. interests, despite top levels of the U.S.

92 Kenneth Conboy and James Morrison, *The CIA’s Secret War in Tibet*, (On line edition: University Press of Kansas, 2002) <http://www.naderlibrary.com/cia.secret.war.htm> (accessed 10 November 2012)

93 Ibid.

administration holding no pretense of commitment to Tibetan independence.⁹⁴ From the beginning the goal was for the movement to disrupt and cause China pain. While not disclosed to the naïve and idealistic Tibetans, there were never any real expectations by the U.S. that a successful realization of liberation of the occupied kingdom would come.⁹⁵

Tibetans began to mobilize into a resistance movement, though uncoordinated and poorly armed the rebels conducted a series of surprisingly successful raids and battles. A widespread popular revolt broke out after the PLA bombed thousand year old Buddhist monasteries killing thousands of monks and civilians massed there for protection. The Dalai Lama's elder brother, Gyalo Thondup, contacted the U.S. asking for help. Although there had been contact with the Tibetans in the past the timing was ideal for the U.S. to become involved. President Eisenhower, while promoting the doctrine of containment, sought to counter communism through more active means. Working with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Allen Welsh Dulles, Eisenhower's direction gave the CIA the authority to begin a more aggressive UW campaigns around the world.⁹⁶ This

94 This view is consistent with researcher Lisa Cathey daughter of a former CIA officer on the Tibetan Task Force, with "unique access to first-hand accounts combined with rare and recently declassified archival media, recent events in the U.S. and India, and diverse perspectives from noted scholars and leading activists." Cathey's research for her ongoing work producing the documentary *CIA in Tibet*, has compiled the largest collection of primary source interviews with Americans and Tibetans involved in the operation. From her perspective, "....support for the Tibetan op was essentially standard Cold War procedure: stopping the spread of Communism, and antagonizing Communist countries in whatever clandestine ways that were logistically possible and the budget allowed." From e-mails between Lisa Cathey and Author. See Lisa Cathey, *CIA in Tibet* website, <http://www.ciaintibet.com/index.php> (accessed on 06 December 2012).

95 The CIA and military assistance was based on U.S. national security interest. On December 1 1994, the Dalai Lama stated that U.S. had 'no courage' to help and it was not a genuine assistance (Laird, 2002: 131). The objective of the operation was based more on the opportunity to wound the Chinese, even slightly, which was oblivious to the Tibetans and idealistic views of good and evil. The sudden cut off of all support was a shock to the naïve Tibetan guerrillas who had come to believe the U.S. would aid them in their cause indefinitely.

96 NSC-68 was the starting point for President Eisenhower's strategy. NSC-68 and NSC 162/2 were an important part of an overall shift in American foreign policy to a comprehensive containment strategy that was confirmed by successive administrations. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Ike's Spies: Eisenhower and the Espionage Establishment*. (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 2012), 172.

plan for a global UW network fit in perfectly with the events unfolding in Tibet and the fledgling resistance to the Chinese. Washington recognized a golden opportunity was presenting itself, by that would allow the U.S. to do something to stem the spread of Communism, or at the very least slow it down. This set the stage for operations to begin.

Working through the Dali Lama's brother, the CIA recruited six Tibetan refugees to serve as their initial agents.⁹⁷ There was little problem obtaining approval in Washington for this modest initial investment in the Tibetan resistance movement. Secretary of State Foster Dulles and Undersecretary of State Herbert Hoover Jr. gave full approval.⁹⁸ The only note of caution came later from the CIA operations chief, Frank Wisner, who insisted that no commitments be made to the Tibetans that would arouse unrealistic expectations that the U.S. could not fulfill. He insisted the primary mission was to provide the "ground truth," assess the strength of rebellion, and make contacts necessary to prepare for the creation of a planned larger resistance network.⁹⁹ Not to engage in combat operations. In 1957 this "pilot team"¹⁰⁰ of six Tibetan Khampas was clandestinely exfiltrated from India to the U.S. territorial island of Saipan. Once there, CIA paramilitary officers trained them for five months in modern weapons, communications, land navigation, map reading, codes, and guerrilla tactics.¹⁰¹ The secondary, and more important, mission of the initial group was to gauge the

97 Gyalo Thondup, the Dalai Lama's older brother made contact with CIA officers in India

98 Evan Thomas, *The Very Best Men: Four who Dared: The Early Years of the CIA* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995), chs. 11 and 19; and Sam Halpern (CIA Far Eastern Division officer and later executive officer to the division chief), interview, 24 January 1995.

99 Mikel Dunham, *Buddha's Warriors, The story of the CIA-backed Tibetan Freedom Fighters, the Chinese Invasion and the Ultimate Fall of Tibet*. First Hardcover Edition, (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2004), 194.

100 Current UW doctrine defines "Pilot Team" as: A deliberately structured composite organization comprised of SF ODA members, with likely augmentation by interagency or other skilled personnel, designed to infiltrate a designated area to conduct sensitive preparation of the environment activities and assess the potential to conduct unconventional warfare in support of U.S. objectives. Department of the Army, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*, Training Circular (TC) 18-01 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, November 2010), glossary-4. Historically the CIA's use of the term more generally refers to the first element on the ground regardless of its make up and inclusion or lack of U.S. personnel.

101 Roger E. McCarthy, *Tears of the Lotus* (2006), 240.

potential of success before Washington approved larger follow on missions. The first team was airdropped into Tibet via B-17s in October 1957.¹⁰² The subsequent ground operation was named ST CIRCUS¹⁰³ while the air support program, used to parachute the teams back into Tibet and drop follow on supplies and weapons, was code-named ST BARNUM.¹⁰⁴

The success of the initial program encouraged the Eisenhower administration that the Tibetans had the will to fight and ability to carry on a guerrilla campaign against their Chinese occupiers. The program was expanded and the agency established a secret military training camp for the resistance fighters at Camp Hale near Leadville, Colorado in 1959.¹⁰⁵ Once the former home of the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division, Camp Hale's 10,000-foot Rocky Mountain peaks, alpine air, and dense forests better matched the Tibetan highlands compared to the tropical island training camp in Saipan.

The Tibetan Resistance, comprised of those trained at Camp Hale, the rebels that were recruited and trained in country, and former members of the original Tibetan Army ranks, swelled to over 35,000 fighters. As the movement grew in numbers, it failed to transition from small unit tactics, to more conventional operations. The rebels came under more and more attacks by the PLA as their camps were compromised and destroyed again and again. By early 1959 the tension between the occupying PLA and the population had reached a boiling point. For the last three months the rebels and PLA had been in a series of battles leaving heavy casualties on both sides. Cracking down on civilians, because of attacks from the rebels, caused large riots in the streets of Lhasa.

102 Conboy and Morrison, *The CIA'S Secret War in Tibet*. Ch. 4

103 "ST" was CIA cryptonym country code for East Asia (including Tibet)

104 ST BARNUM would use a seconded air wing from Kadena air bar in Okinawa Japan for major air operations and the CIA proprietary airline CAT air (later renamed Air America during operations in Indochina). While this study focus more on the key events and ground operations the successes of the air operations in PT BARNUM set a new standard. See Kenneth Conboy and James Morrison, *The CIA'S Secret War in Tibet*, (University Press of Kansas, 2002), 55.

105 Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars*.164.

The last straw was when the PLA began to shell ancient Buddhist temples and monasteries in order to ferret out rebels who might have used them for shelter.

In response an all-out revolt erupted in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. Civilians formed a human wall around the Dalai Lama's residence and were gunned down. On 17 March 1959, the Dalai Lama, realizing there would be no peace by attempting to appease the PRC, disguised his identity and escaped through guerrilla-held territory. Two CIA-trained Tibetans escorted him to the Indian border.¹⁰⁶ In the meantime, the revolt in Lhasa rapidly escalated into a full-scale rebellion. The authorities in Beijing kept the Chinese People's Liberation Army in Tibet on the defensive for ten days, but on 20 March they ordered reinforcements and additional attack aircraft to crush the rebellion. In subsequent weeks, the PLA ruthlessly mopped up the resistance in Lhasa and many other parts of Tibet.¹⁰⁷

After the failed 1959 rebellion, their ranks decimated, the time had come to withdraw the surviving fighters to a base camp out of the PLA's reach. In the summer of 1960 the Tibetan guerrilla base was relocated to "Mustang province," a barren scrap and rugged land extending into Tibetan borders but belonging to the unwitting Kingdom of Nepal. Mustang encompassed 1,943 square kilometers of arid gorges and cliffs centered along Nepal's northern border. Surrounded on three sides by Tibet, its population and culture was entirely Tibetan Buddhist.

106 Conboy and Morrison claim that the CIA's role in assisting the Dalai Lama in his flight from Tibet and in establishing a Tibetan government-in-exile as well as paramilitary forces "was a significant boost in the morale in the refugee community." This assistance, they argue, "helped carry the diaspora community and its leadership through the darkest years of exile when their cause might have been otherwise forgotten" Conboy and Morrison, *The CIA'S Secret War in Tibet*. p.x Also see McCarthy, *Tears of the Lotus*, 181–188.

There are also reports that CIA PM officer "Tony Poe" (Anthony Poshepny) was part of the operation to get the Dalai Lama out of Tibet. While confirmed as a member of the however, confirmation of the details of his role on the actual operation has not been found by this research. Poe has been connected to numerous UW operations including: Tibet, Indonesia, Laos, and China. See; John Prados *Presidents' Secret Wars*. 1988), 141, 162, 272, 276, 286, 296.

107 Chen Jian, *The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's Changing Relations with India and the Soviet Union*, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no.3 (2006)

Here the *Chusi Gangdruk*,¹⁰⁸ a guerrilla army of some 2,000 ethnic Khampa, and the surviving resistance fighters from the original program, ran cross-border, hit and run, and intelligence gathering operations against the Chinese.

In 1962, the CIA also began working with Indian intelligence services to provide training and supply agents in Tibet. Together they created a Special Forces unit made up of Tibetan refugees, which would become the Special Frontier Force. The CIA's Tibetan operations continued until 1974 when strains in U.S.-Indian relations, the improvement of U.S. diplomatic ties with the PRC, and the Nepalese government's occupation of the Mustang base brought the Tibet program to an end.

According to Kenneth Conboy and James Morrison, *The CIA'S Secret War in Tibet*, "Tibet became a vital Cold War proving ground for CIA case officers and their spy craft."¹⁰⁹ Many of the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP's) for UW were combat-tested in this operation and would become standard procedures throughout the Cold War.

3. Analysis

The following sections of this chapter will highlight significant factors that were implicitly or explicitly influential in the decision to embark on operations ST CIRCUS and ST BARNUM in contrast to the other two general options of no

108 Also spelled Gangdrug normally translated as "The Kham Four Rivers, Six Ranges Tibetan Defenders of the Faith Volunteer Army, commonly referred to as the "Tibetan Freedom Fighters" in the U.S. "Four Rivers, Six Ranges" is the name traditionally given to the eastern Tibetan region of Kham, the southeast area of Tibet where many Chushi Gangdruk members are from. See Dorje Gyurme, *Footprint Tibet* 3rd ed. (Bath: Footprint Handbooks Ltd, 2004), 400.

109 Conboy and Morrison, *The CIA'S Secret War in Tibet*.

military action, or overt and conventional military action. These factors have been categorized into Internal Enablers, Internal Constraints, External Enablers, and External Constraints.¹¹⁰

a. *The Decision Point*

The decision point for Tibet is bracketed by two periods of time (see Figure 8). The first, an event that occurred in 1957, following the Pilot Team exfiltration from Tibet, ST CIRCUS began when CIA trained recruited Tibetan Resistance fighters in basic guerilla warfare were air dropped back into Tibet to assess the feasibility of recruiting and organizing a resistance movement. This marked the “trial stage” of the operation. Externally, the first batch of Tibetan Resistance proved their mettle against the PLA, giving President Eisenhower confirmation of their capability and the promise of success. This would lead into the decision point. Following the decision point are external and internal events that are indicative of increased throughputs and outputs. First, the addition of the Camp Hale training site in Colorado demonstrates the ramp up in the campaign. In the realm of output, the PLA suffered increased casualties resulting from clashes with Tibetan Resistance. This in turn led to a chain of events starting with the PLA’s decision to shell Buddhist Temples. This action by the PLA added to the discontent cumulating in the 1959 rebellion in the capital city of Lhasa, increasing PLA violence that was decisive to the Dalai Lama’s escape. An additional mark of ‘post-decision’ is the internal measure of effectiveness of ST BARNUM, when, according to Dunham, an estimated “minimum of 550,000 to nearly 800,000 pounds of material [was] being parachuted to the volunteers by

110 Enablers are arguments for action, either oppose no military action, or support UW over conventional military action. Constraints are arguments for no action, or they argue for the use of conventional military action over UW. The internal domain is that which is driven by the U.S.. This is a function of popular opinion or support (important due to the U.S. status as a democracy), capability, capacity, or leadership. The external domain is that outside of the U.S.. This includes the “targeted country’s” internal activities and circumstance, world events and reaction, and, perhaps the most heavily weighted, peer competitors’ actions, capacity, and capability.

the beginning of 1959.”¹¹¹ This shows that the operation was well underway. Therefore, the decision point can be estimated to have occurred in the year 1958.

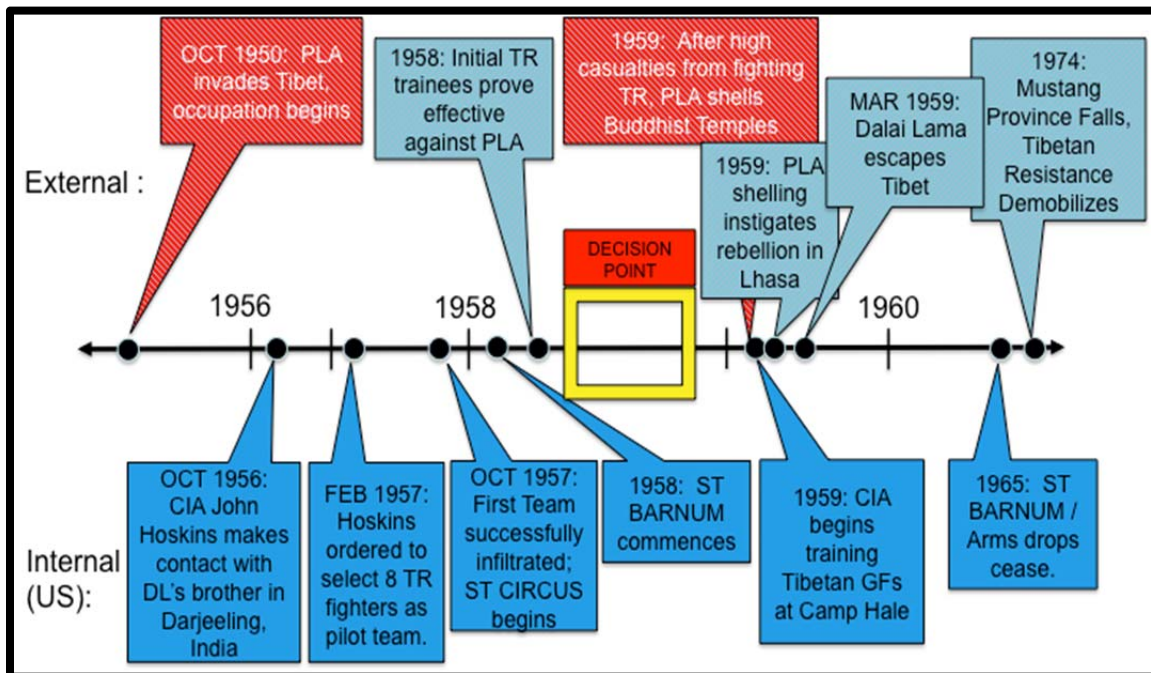


Figure 8. Decision Point Timeline: Tibet

b. Internal Enablers

Tibet had a Marketable Narrative. The Anti-communism narrative in the U.S. gained momentum during the 1950s. This would provide popular support for any administration making a tough stance on containing communist holdings and curbing their further spread. Eisenhower ran his campaign against the Democrats on the platform that Democrats were weak on Communism. Ambrose writes, “The Republicans had just won an election, in part, by demanding to know ‘Who Lost China?’”¹¹² After winning the election in November 1952, Eisenhower toured the Korean theater with some

¹¹¹ Dunham, *Buddha's Warriors*, 263.

¹¹² Stephen Ambrose, *Ike's Spies*, (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1981).

of his future cabinet members. Shortly after his inauguration, Eisenhower's "New Look" policy served as the backbone of U.S. strategy to counter USSR threats.¹¹³ This was further validated with NSC 162/2, signed 30 October 1953, which emphasized U.S. policy to counter the threat of the USSR and Communist China.¹¹⁴ U.S. efforts in Tibet, specifically sponsoring a resistance to disrupt a communist enemy, were within the accepted narrative.

Conventional Forces Impractical Strategic Option:

The U.S. military had a change of focus and retooling under the New Look. The "New Look" policy shifted from Truman's "short term" crisis response in an effort to face a protracted military and economic challenge. Herman Wolk captures the core of this policy in his article titled "The New Look," published in *Air Force Magazine*, he writes: "In December 1953, Radford, the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, stated that the new defense policy was crafted for the 'long pull, not a year of crisis.' The United States, Radford said, 'must be ready for tremendous, vast, retaliatory, and counteroffensive blows in the event of a global war, and we must be ready for lesser military actions short of an all-out war.'" Eisenhower considered economic factors while forging a military capacity to meet the Soviet threat by the lowest feasible cost.¹¹⁵ Aside from the economic factors, The New Look faced the challenge dictated by a new means of warfare: Mutually Assured Destruction. Before the U.S. and USSR race to the moon, other "races" in technological advances occurred.¹¹⁶ The interceptor aircraft and jet bomber race as well as the race for the quietest submarines were

113 Herman S. Wolk, "The 'New Look'," *Air Force Magazine*, v. 65, no. 8, (August 2003). <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2003/August%202003/0803look.aspx> (accessed 31 October, 2012)

114 "A report to the National Security Council, October 30, 1953." PDF from website: <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-162-2.pdf>, (accessed 18 November 2012).

115 Herman S. Wolk, "The 'New Look'," *Air Force Magazine*, v. 65, no. 8, (August 2003). website <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2003/August%202003/0803look.aspx>; NSC 162/2 p. 19, (accessed 31 October, 2012).

116 The race to the Moon took place under Kennedy's Administration, but the preceding races, namely in interceptor and bomber capability, began under Eisenhower.

all supporting mediums for nuclear war.¹¹⁷ By developing a capability to interdict and deliver a nuclear arsenal, deterrence could be used to thwart Soviet aggression.¹¹⁸ The report to the National Security Council of October 30, 1953 (NSC 162/2) declared that the “risk of Soviet aggression will be minimized by maintaining a strong security posture, with emphasis on adequate offensive retaliatory strength and defensive strength. This must be based on massive atomic capability.”¹¹⁹

As conventional forces prepared for total war in a nuclear environment, the prediction for “limited war” appeared less likely. A confrontation with the Soviets would be nuclear or total war. According to Grimmett’s Congressional Research Study on *Instances of Use of U.S. Armed Forces Abroad*, after Korea, the next decisive combat was seen in Vietnam in the 1960s. Meanwhile, Conventional Military forces were used to defend against or deter an enemy, or to evacuate or protect American citizens.¹²⁰ Therefore, the New Look and NSC 162/2 focused the use of conventional forces towards use for total war against the USSR or the Communists. The CIA and the newly organized Army Special Forces were filling the gap required to “take feasible political, economic, propaganda and covert measures designed to create and exploit troublesome problems for the USSR, [and] impair Soviet relations with Communist China.”¹²¹ Ultimately making use of conventional forces impractical for anything but total or nuclear war.

117 A Brief History of Air Warfare, website http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/wars_airwar.html, accessed 18 November 2012; Thomas B. Allen. “Run Silent, Run Deep: In the Cold War’s undersea cat and mouse game, the prize went to the submarine that could,” *Smithsonian.com*. website: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/sub-abstract.html>, Read more: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/sub-abstract.html#ixzz2CdnsWqFE>, (accessed 18 November 2012).

118 Wolk, “The New Look.”

119 “A report to the National Security Council, October 30, 1953 (NSC 162/2).” PDF from website: <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-162-2.pdf>, (accessed 18 November 2012), 19, section 34. a

120 Richard Grimmett, *Congressional Research Service* “Instances of Use of U.S. Armed Forces Abroad, 1798–2009.” (2010), 11–12.

121 NSC 162/2, 25.

Conventional Warfare Strategically Impractical. With the Cold War ramping up, new conflicts on the Korean Peninsula at a boil and old conflicts in Europe on a slow simmer, U.S. military assets were limited.¹²² Due to the requirement to maintain balance in Europe and keep the USSR at bay, not only were there limitations in conventional forces for deployment to Korea, but also there were none available to support the Tibetan resistance. In addition to the lack of military forces, national interests were not aligned with deploying conventional forces to Tibet. However, Secretary of State Dulles described a requirement for versatility that drives the need to develop capability. “If an enemy could pick his time and place and method of warfare, and if our policy was to remain the traditional one of meeting aggression by direct and local opposition, then we needed to be ready to fight in the Arctic and in the tropics; in Asia, the Near East and in Europe; by sea, by land, and by air; with old weapons and with new weapons.”¹²³ The combined lack of forces and lack of national interests precluded conventional operations from taking place in Tibet. This left only one option of action remaining: UW.

UW Experienced Individuals Influential to Decision Maker. President Eisenhower was a supporter of covert operations and the utility of UW. Mitchell Fredurra posits “Eisenhower’s past experience as the Supreme Allied Commander during World War II also imbued him with a proclivity for “covert and psychological” warfare.” He quotes Stephen Ambrose to describe Ike’s experience in World War II, “the success of the British Secret Service had impressed Dwight Eisenhower... simultaneously he commanded a series of covert operations that played a crucial role in the final victory. So, when Eisenhower became President, he encouraged the growth of the CIA...”¹²⁴ In addition to this support, his cabinet enjoyed an uncommon collaboration between

122 NSC 162/2, 22.

123 Wolk, “New Look.”

124 Mitchell Fredurra, *Operation Oops!: A Case Study in Misperception*. (2012) <http://www.iranian.com/main/2012/jan/operation-oops>, (accessed 16 November 2012); Also see: Ambrose, *Ike’s Spies*..

the CIA and State Department, a result of brotherhood of the literal sense. John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State from 1953–1959, was the brother of Allen Welsh Dulles, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency from 1953–1961. In addition to this closeness that would permeate to their respective subordinates, the collaboration started as early as TP AJAX in Iran in 1953 and extended through PB SUCCESS in Guatemala circa 1954.¹²⁵ Although this is not a main factor, it cannot be ignored that this legacy of collaboration in the early days of the administration likely extended through the genesis of ST CIRCUS.

Further indication of President Eisenhower's support of UW, was Executive Order 10483, signed in September of 1953 that established the Operations Coordinating Board, also known as the "Board." This organization was devised to report to the National Security Council, to advise on covert action and replaced the Psychological Strategy Board.¹²⁶ The Chairman of the *Board* was the Under Secretary of State, other members included: Deputy Secretary of Defense, Director of Foreign Operations Administration, Director of Central Intelligence, and one other member, rumored to be the President's Special Assistant for Psychological Warfare. Also welcome to attend were Special Assistant to National Security Advisor, and the Director of the U.S. Information Agency. This network of advisors would support decision making for unconventional warfare campaigns.¹²⁷

UW Successes Increasing Influence on Decision Makers. As it affected the rapid support and commitment to PB SUCCESS, the early successes in Iran during TP AJAX cannot be underestimated in terms of reputation and clout it brought the CIA within the beltway. The mid-1950s saw

125 Nicholas Cullather. *Operation PBSUCCESS: The United States and Guatemala 1952–1954*. (Washington, DC: History Staff Center for the Study of Intelligence CIA, 1994).

126 Eisenhower, Executive Order 10483, "Establishing the OPC." September 2, 1953. The American President Project website, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=60573>, (accessed 16 November 2012).

127 Providing oversight and development of plans, the Board was used to streamline decision making with stakeholders. President Kennedy dissolved the Board in February 1961, and this may have led to the failures in South Vietnam (the coup against President Diem in 1963) and in Bay of Pigs OP ZAPATA (April of 1961).

great gains for relatively low cost and minimal U.S. bloodshed when the governments of Iran and Guatemala were overthrown and supplanted by U.S. sponsored entities. With the preparatory intelligence gathering and infrastructure development in Tibet approached the decision point to invest into operations under the plan of ST CIRCUS and BARNUM, the CIA was still enjoying a winning record and achieving national policy in arenas of less than all-out conventional conflict. Leaving the “big fight” to the Pentagon, the CIA was developing a reputation of waging and winning the “small fights” to counter communist expansion and influence.¹²⁸

Presence of a UW Experienced Organization. The OSS lineage created key players that transitioned into the newly established CIA. The legacy of experience, coupled with the institutionalized knowledge and processes were instrumental in developing a successful post war intelligence and covert action capability. Several key agents or leaders, from case officers and trainers all the way up to the CIA leadership, were groomed by their earlier experience during the Allies’ partisan warfare campaign while serving in the OSS. This applied to Tibet in that a legacy concept of operation and strategy of partisan warfare was easy to transfer into the context of a PRC occupation in Tibet. Also, the institutionalized processes were key to developing a plan and gaining approval.

c. External Enablers

A Strategy Existed that Required the Development of a Network in the Steady State. An atomic USSR, intelligence requirements, and the foundation of a network were all reasons to develop a strategy to aid Tibet. The threat of the Soviet Union becoming a nuclear power was very real. If the USSR became a nuclear power, it would make the complex Cold War even more dynamic. The CIA, only recently confirmed the mission of Douglas Mackiernan “to investigate Moscow’s access to local uranium deposits and report any sign of

¹²⁸ Cullather, *Operation PBSUCCESS*.

nuclear testing in Soviet Central Asia.”¹²⁹ The CIA’s quest to assess and confirm or deny the capability of the USSR to attain nuclear weapons, through operations based in China, was cut short after the PRC consolidated power on the mainland. As the intelligence requirements grew, from originally monitoring USSR nuclear capability to understanding the PRC, so did the requirements to develop infrastructure and networks to attain it.

After several British intelligence scandals, the uncovering of high level infiltrations of the British service and subsequent failures in Western led infiltration operations in Eastern Europe due to leaked operational details, the relationship was strained.¹³⁰ With Hong Kong being the only window into the PRC, and Hong Kong under the control of the British, ST CIRCUS was potentially, and later realized, the best means for U.S. intelligence to gain insight on the PRC.¹³¹

The requirement to attain intelligence on the PRC was clear. Tibet offered the potential lead the CIA needed, and through its development of relationships with the Tibetan contacts that could potentially help them attain insight on PRC intentions, a network was fostered. The opportunity was later presented to the CIA to expand collection into disruption after the movement approached the CIA for support. The steady state activity that encompassed

129 Speech by Michael Hayden, CIA Director, on September 16, 2008. Transcript retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/speeches-testimony-archive-2008/directors-remarks-at-lawac.html>, accessed 22 October 2012.

130 The agency, for example, had supported a failed anti-Soviet uprising among Ukrainian nationalists between 1949 and 1952. More embarrassing was its assistance to Polish insurgents beginning in 1950, which was revealed in December 1952 to have been turned from the start. During the same period, the CIA fell victim to another Soviet-orchestrated resistance sting in Albania.

131 Consequently, one of the few major intelligence scores of ST CIRCUS was the capture of a satchel during a cross border raid by the Mustang fighters. The intelligence gained by exploiting the documents in the satchel was a gold mine of information and became the framework for the complete intelligence picture of the PRC. The satchel was by no means the last of it. In 1962 a Tibetan spy team located deep inside Chinese territory photographed Chinese military sites, made maps and located potential parachute drop zones, at the same time helping to inform the United States about China’s missile programs and efforts to develop nuclear weapons. After repeated attempts, Tibetan operatives managed to plant sensors that gave Washington its earliest clues of China’s first nuclear test at Lop Nor, north of Tibet, in 1964.

developing a mechanism for intelligence collection, allowed for a transition, or an expansion into UW. Another way to view this is if an intelligence requirement had not existed, it would be unlikely that the CIA would have developed a network and/or infrastructure, and therefore would not be able to easily transition into UW activity. U.S. strategy demanded intelligence, leading the U.S. to Tibet, therefore making UW possible.

UW as a Supporting Effort in Grand Strategy. In Army doctrine, the main effort is where decisive action will occur; it is therefore where emphasis lies in support and resources. Units can switch from supporting efforts to main efforts as different phases of an operation transition. Additionally, supporting efforts are necessary to set conditions for the decisive action. UW, in terms of grand strategy, can set conditions for the main effort. During the late 1940s, after the Japanese surrender, the Kuomintang (KMT) led by Chiang Kai-shek returned their main focus from resisting the Japanese occupation to defending against Mao Tse-Tung's Chinese Communists. U.S. efforts to prevent the Chinese takeover were checked, and eventually Chiang Kai-shek and his Chinese nationalists retreated to the island of Formosa, commonly known as Taiwan. This was became the Main Effort for the U.S. in the region. Then, after communists tried to push south on the Korean Peninsula to establish a unified communist Korea, the U.S. shifted focus and the Republic of Korea became the new Main Effort. With the PRC supporting the DPRK forces in the north, the international conflict further fouled relations between the PRC and the U.S.. The PRC stopped the U.S. and South Korean thrust into the north to consolidate the Korean Peninsula, and despite heavy losses to achieve their objective, the PRC was able to push them south to the present day DMZ. The United States was reluctant to embark on yet another total war, largely because the USSR had not weighed in yet and U.S. military power was necessary to maintain balance in Europe. U.S. and ROK forces unwilling, or unable to push north to consolidate the peninsula, remain at a standstill at the DMZ still rooted to the same location today.

The Republic of China, the nationalists who were now occupied Formosa, became a supporting effort. The likelihood of the ROC establishing a beachhead and vanquishing the PRC to retake the mainland was unlikely.¹³² However, from the perspective of Mao Tse-tung, the communist revolution remained unfinished. The ROC and its army still held on to Taiwan, and would not give up their struggle.

Finally, a third regional contender and on the flanks of the PRC lay India. India was one of the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China. However, as a result of the PLA invasion into Tibet, Indian policy could reflect on a failure to maintain Tibet as a buffer between the two regional powers. Consequently, the Indian-China war of 1962 underscored the mistake.¹³³ As the two regional powers began to square off, the CIA could capitalize on the tensions and gain support of their activities from India. Not only would disruption in Tibet force PRC action and attention to their newly occupied "province," it would divert PRC attention from India, Formosa, and Korea.

Therefore, as U.S. supporting efforts in the region ST CIRCUS and BARNUM offered a means to set conditions for the main effort, the Korean Peninsula. The situation there was all but stable and constantly threatened to erupt again. The supporting efforts in Formosa and the Indian border would also benefit from tying up PLA assets in Tibet. After all, the PRC had up to 100,000 PLA troops committed to securing the occupation of Tibet, not to mention the costly casualties and expended munitions the conflict was racking up.¹³⁴

Conditions Did Not Predicate an Immediate Conventional Response. Tibet had a time horizon that did not force the decision maker to act. The PRC stole the initiative by invading Tibetan sovereignty, and in terms of U.S.

132 NSC 162/2, 3.

133 The India-China war of 1962 would further open the door for the CIA to expand the Tibetan program to include working through the Indian intelligence services to run agents in Tibet and for the paramilitary to stand up and train a territorial Special Forces unit made up entirely of Tibetan refugees.

134 Sources vary between 20,000 troops to 100,000.

national interests, there were no obligations to Tibet demanding an immediate conventional military response. PLA forces had already massed on the border and crossed over, and began their occupation. Any overt U.S. military response would have been too late; the crisis was over. Therefore, U.S. decision makers were free of a time constraint forcing action. With the advantage of stealing the initiative on their own terms, the movement and its subsequent sponsors were in a position of advantage. The U.S. had the freedom to respond without haste.

If conventional military options are the appropriate contingency force to meet an adversary's invading force, and an obligation exists to use force to defend a strategic interest, then conventional military operations are preferred. UW can fulfill contingencies if the necessary preparatory activities have occurred before the crisis. However, UW is also a suitable option when events do not predicate *immediate* contingency response, when time is not an issue. In the case of Tibet, time was on the side of the movement and its sponsors. PLA occupation methods were only further exacerbating the social fractures in Tibet, driving men and monks alike into the movement.

d. Internal Constraints

Diplomacy First. Many in Washington felt a UW campaign supporting Tibet was of little value and risked threatening U.S. diplomatic efforts towards the fledgling PRC, or worse, could further escalate tension between India and China. John Roberts II, in his article titled "The Secret war over Tibet," claims ST BARNUM's supply "route involved over-flights of India, there was always a risk that a plane would go down in Indian territory. [Indian and Chinese relations] were certain to be badly strained if China interpreted the over-flights as tacit Indian support for the secret war."¹³⁵ This constraint, an attempt to prevent UW, was overcome by the justification to intervene.

¹³⁵ John Roberts II, "The Secret War Over Tibet: □ A story of Cold War heroism -- and Kennedy administration cowardice and □ betrayal." website: <http://www.mitbbs.com/pc/pcon.php?id=2306&nid=33279&s=all>, (accessed on 01 November 2012).

e. External Constraints

Intervention and Escalation. As seen already on the Korean Peninsula, the PRC ability to stall U.S. military advances caused reason to, at minimum, respect PRC military capacity. Furthermore, the fear that the USSR would militarily support their fellow communists in a regional-turned-global conflict was a significant factor in the U.S./ROK willingness to remain at the present day DMZ in Korea.

If a conventional military campaign were used to support the Tibetans and disrupt the PLA, PRC reaction and escalation¹³⁶ could bring another regional conflict to the brink of all out world war. The U.S. populace, with the rest of the world in agreement, was unwilling to rush into a third world war. Both Soviet and U.S. strategy and capacity was centered on mutually assured destruction through a complex nuclear arsenal developed by both sides. PRC regional escalation could, in turn, draw Soviet support, effectively raising the stakes and risking a potential nuclear war. This constrained the use of any campaign initiated by the U.S., conventional or unconventional, under the assumption that if detected, intervention and escalation were very real reactions by U.S. adversaries. This constraint was overcome by confidence that the covert nature of UW would keep U.S. actions undetected, or at least deniable.

Historic Dispute and Similar Claims by an Ally. Many inside the U.S. viewed China's expansion into Tibet as an attempt to regain what was a part of its rightful sovereign territory. To complicate the matter, the KMT, now the Republic of China, had similar views towards Tibet: that it would fall under the

¹³⁶ Forrest Morgan, et.al. *Dangerous Thresholds, Managing Escalation in the 21st Century*, a Rand Study published for the Air Force, defines escalation as "an increase in the intensity or scope of conflict that crosses threshold(s) considered significant by one or more of the participants. Escalation is a natural tendency in any form of human competition. When competition involves military confrontation or limited war, the pressure to escalate can become intense because of the weight of issues that bring actors into violent conflict and the potential costs of losing contests of deadly force. Escalation can be unilateral, but it is often reciprocal, as each combatant struggles ever harder to achieve victory or avoid defeat. Left unchecked, escalatory chain reactions can occur, raising the costs of war to catastrophic levels for combatants and noncombatants alike."

banner of a united China. However, this did not infer that the ROC would not support a Tibetan resistance, quite opposite, the ROC provided sanctuary and training sites for the CIA and the Tibetans. Additionally, the ROC and Tibetan resistance executed several bilateral missions against the PRC.¹³⁷ The U.S. could not openly dispute PRC claims against Tibet with the knowledge that if the ROC regained control of China, a similar claim would be made that the U.S. would not oppose. This constrained intervention, in that this could be viewed as local matter that should be addressed by locals. In fact, the movement in Tibet was an *organic-resistance*. U.S. sponsorship of the movement allowed locals to address the issue.

4. Summary

The policies opposing Communism, fiscal constraints initiated by the New Look, the OSS legacy emerging in the new CIA and key personalities surrounding decision makers, coupled with the need to develop intelligence on the PRC, the ease in which this new “steady state” of activity could transition into a UW campaign, and the opportunity that such a campaign provided to disrupt an growing adversary were all key enablers for unconventional warfare in Tibet. These outweighed any constraints offered, as history proves by the existence of this case. The case of Tibet captures the essence of *Organic-Resistance* and embodies a campaign of disruption. The benefits of the *Organic-Resistance* are in their self-motivation and their willingness to fight; one shortcoming of these types of movement, in reference to sponsorship, is the frustration when the policy of the sponsor diverges from that of the movement. The next case, a *Synthetic-Resistance*, occurs in Laos. The timeline of events proves almost parallel, and many of the same shaping variables are evident in both Tibet and Laos.

137 Conboy and Morrison, *CIA's Secret War in Tibet*. Ch.7

C. CASE III: LAOS, 1958–1973¹³⁸

1. Introduction

The unconventional warfare campaign conducted in the Kingdom of Laos against the Pathet Lao and Viet Minh communist invaders represents an example of a *Synthetic-Resistance* movement, identified by the UW typology methods in this work.¹³⁹ Regional events between neighboring countries and world powers turned the small neutral country, with no real defense capabilities, into a contested battleground in a violent war spanning over two decades. During that period Laos endured several regime changes, marked by coups and counter-coups, cross-border operations, secret airfields, the use of indigenous and third nation surrogate fighters, and an ongoing battle to slow the Viet Minh from rolling through Laos into Thailand all which made this UW campaign vital to U.S. interests.

Finally, Laos provides this research a specific case of Special Forces and CIA cooperation. The operations conducted in Laos, both with the Royal Army and the indigenous tribes, complemented each organization's strengths and design. It spans from covert, to clandestine, to overt use of UW and COIN, all in the same campaign. Perhaps most important lesson is that the "Secret War" in Laos provided a bridge that linked the first generation of unconventional warfare practitioners, found in the legacy of the OSS, to the next generation. Both the CIA and Special Forces developed methods and experiences that created a capability for future UW campaigns.

2. Background

Before the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, there was already an ongoing unconventional warfare campaign in the remote, jungle-covered mountains of Southeast Asia. Spanning over fifteen years, the CIA and U.S. Army Special

¹³⁸ While this case is dated 1958–1973 because of the determined decision point, it is inclusive of *all activities* associated with the operation.

¹³⁹ See Chapter II.

Forces ran a “Secret War” that disposed three regimes, as well as trained, organized and led indigenous tribes against communist forces occupying northern Laos and across the border in North Vietnam.¹⁴⁰ With expenditures exceeded \$300 million a year; Laos was reportedly the largest U.S. covert operation prior to the Afghan-Soviet War.¹⁴¹

From the beginning of U.S. involvement in Indochina, two separate missions were initiated in Laos: the counter insurgency campaign to support the Royal Lao government in the south, and the unconventional warfare campaign, disrupting the Pathet Lao Communists in the territory they occupied with the

140 The term “secret war” describing CIA and Special Forces operations in Laos was coined by T. D. Allman an American freelance journalist best known for his exposés of the CIA’s “secret war” and for his later interviews with world figures (Yasser Arafat, Helmut Kohl, Boris Yeltsin, Manuel Antonio Noriega) as foreign correspondent for Vanity Fair. For recent studies of the war in Laos, see Timothy N. Castle, *At War in the Shadow of Vietnam: U.S. Military Aid to the Royal Lao Government* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Jan Hamilton-Merritt, *Tragic Mountains: The Hmong, The Americans, and Secret Wars for Laos, 1942–1992* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Kenneth Conboy and James Morrison, *Shadow War: The CIA’s Secret War in Laos* (Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 1995); and Roger Warner, *Shooting at the Moon: The Story of America’s Clandestine War in Laos* (South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press, 1996), which is the revised edition of *Back Fire: The CIA’s Secret War in Laos and Its Links to the War in Vietnam* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995).

141 Roger Warner, *Shooting at the Moon: The Story of America’s Clandestine War in Laos*, (Hanover, NH: Steerforth, 1998). Separate source calls Laos “The largest paramilitary operations ever undertaken by the CIA” William M. Leary, *CIA Air Operations in Laos, 1955–1974: Supporting the “Secret War”* From the CIA website: <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/winter99-00/art7.html#rft12>, (accessed 22 October 2012).

North Vietnamese Viet Minh in the North.¹⁴² Laos also served as a staging ground for cross border operations in North Vietnam itself.

In the early 1950s Laos as a nation did not yet exist. The French created a new South East Asia by dividing the various kingdoms and principalities that formed “Indochina” into three new autonomous states: Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Drawing lines on a map, the French created Laos by merging the kingdom of *Luangprabang*, the monarch of which became King of Laos, with its rival kingdom of *Champassak*.¹⁴³ After the Japanese withdrew following World War II, King Sisavang Vong declared Laotian independence, and a nationalist resistance movement took shape, known as the *Lao Issara* (Free Lao). The Lao Issara formed an interim government, under one of the king’s cousins Prince Phetsarat. For the first time since the early 18th century, Laos was a country. This independence was short lived and, bowing to politics, the king began to protest an independent Laos in favor of support from the French. The newly formed soon nation became divided. The king passed a decree dismissing Phetsarat as Prime Minister, and the newly formed Nationalists’ government declared Laos no longer subject to royal laws. The French ended this standoff by seizing control after the

142 The name “Pathet Lao” (Land of Laos) referred to the communist movement that occurred in Laos beginning in the 1950s and was the Laotian equivalent of Cambodia’s Khmer Rouge and Vietnam’s Viet Cong. Prince Souphanouvong in North Vietnam formed the movement during the first Indochina War between France and the Vietnamese communists. The Pathet Lao was committed to the communist struggle against colonialism. In 1953, the Pathet Lao guerrillas accompanied a Viet Minh invasion of Laos from Vietnam and established a government at Samneua in northern Laos. From <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/laos.htm>, (accessed 22 October 2012).

While some current studies classify operations in Laos (specifically OP WHITESTAR) as COIN due to the U.S. aid to the Royal Lao government (see Derek Jones, *Ending The Debate: Unconventional Warfare, Foreign Internal Defense, and Why Words Matter*, 19–20), there are numerous first hand accounts that document the two missions as separate operations (see Shelby L. Stanton, *Special Forces at War: An Illustrated History, Southeast Asia 1957–1975*, (Minneapolis, MN: Zenith Press, 2008), 22.

Research indicates that the U.S. operations in Laos were not limited to COIN: there were numerous operations (OP ERAWAN, the *Auto Defense de choc* and *Maquis* programs, etc.) that pre-date the COIN operations that were UW operations, by current doctrinal definitions. See Timothy Neil Castle, *At War in the Shadow of Vietnam: U.S. Military Aid to the Royal Lao Government, 1955–73*, (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1991) and others.

143 “Laos: 4 Phases to Nonexistence” Time Magazine, (June 8, 1962).

Japanese departure. The Issara government under Prince Phetsarat was unwilling to accept a Lao return to subjugation as a French colony, and self exiled to Thailand and Vietnam.

In the northern Lao provinces a movement began that continued resistance to the French and supported the Lao Issara nationalist ideals. This movement became known as the *Pathet Lao* (Land of the Lao) and began to receive support from another movement allied against the French, the Viet Minh. Joint Lao Issara–Viet Minh forces resisted the French reoccupation. Prince Souphanouvong, former Prime Minister Prince Phetsarat’s brother, brokered the Lao Issara–Viet Minh alliance from safe haven while in exile in Thailand. He later broke all ties with the Lao Issara movement when his connection with the Viet Minh began to be questioned.

After their military defeat in Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the French ability to stem the spread of communism in Indochina waned. Popular support for the French occupation in the region was also declining. The Geneva Conference of 1954 effectively ended the first Indochina war; the U.S., USSR, PRC, and France all agreed that Laos should be independent and more importantly neutral.¹⁴⁴ Laotian independence suited U.S. policy in Southeast Asia, as long as the new government remained non-Communist. Laos, remaining neutral, acted as a buffer between Thailand and North Vietnam representing one of the “dominos” in the region that President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles

¹⁴⁴ Although the U.S. agreed to the accords it did not sign them to prevent being legally bound to them. John P. Glennon, United States Department of State Foreign relations of the United States, 1952–1954. The Geneva Conference Volume XVI, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952–1954, from <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS195254v16> (accessed on 22 October 2012).

were concerned might fall.¹⁴⁵ Although the small country had little intrinsic strategic value, its geographical location was ground zero for the spreading Cold War in Southeast Asia.

While the Geneva Agreements hastened France's departure, it also ended its funding of the Lao National Army (*Armée Nationale Laotienne* or ANL) in 1955.¹⁴⁶ When the French declared Laos independent, it was not prepared to stand as a separate nation and defend its sovereignty. The small country was divided and controlled by the former royal princes. The northern provinces were run by the communist Pathet Lao leader Prince Souphanouvong while the remainder of the country and central government fell under the newly appointed Premier Prince Souvanna Phouma his half-brother.

Anticipating that the communist powers (USSR, PRC, NVN) would not honor the accords and limit support to the Laotian Communists, the U.S. began to fill the void from the French withdrawal and increased its financial aid earmarked for military assistance.¹⁴⁷ To manage this increased support the U.S. increased the size of the country team and Embassy mission. The United States Operations Mission (USOM) was established in the embassy in Vientiane, in order to manage the funding it was providing to the newly independent Laotian government and the ANL. To assist in the transition the French would leave a small contingent of military advisers to help train the ANL, but it would be the U.S. who provided the funding.¹⁴⁸

145 The "domino theory" was a theory during the 1950s to 1980s, that speculated that if one state in a region came under the influence of communism, and then the surrounding countries would follow in a domino effect. The domino theory was used by successive United States administrations during the Cold War to justify the need for American intervention around the world. Referring to communism in Indochina, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower put the theory into words during an April 7, 1954 news conference. *Public Papers of the Presidents*, (1954), 382.

146 Alternately referred to as the Royal Lao Army (FAR), Kenneth Conboy, *Shadow War: The CIA's Secret War In Laos*, (University Press of Kansas, 1995), 17.

147 Douglas Blaufarb, *Organizing and Managing Unconventional Warfare in Laos, 1962–1970*. Rand, Santa Monica Ca. 1972. PDF archived on Rand website: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R919.html>, (accessed 16 November 2012).

148 Shelby L. Stanton, *Special Forces at War*, 21.

In December 1955, as communist forces consolidated power in two northern provinces of the country around Prince Souphanouvong, U.S. support to the central government grew accordingly. A threatened military coup from the communists allowed U.S. backed General Phoumi Nosavan the acting Defense Ministry to take power as prime minister. This solidified the U.S. role as the main sponsor, effectively replacing the French. The U.S. established a second organization to meet the requirements of the new role, the Program Evaluation Office (PEO). This new office expanded the nature of the U.S. support to include more active, though covert missions.¹⁴⁹ Under the 1954 Geneva Accords, an overt military organization similar to the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Vietnam was prohibited.¹⁵⁰ The PEO filled the role of a Military Assistance Advisory Group while still maintaining an outward civilian appearance. The PEO was staffed by reserve or retired military personnel and active duty military officers given U.S. State Department Foreign Service Reserve Officer (FSRO) rank while seconded to the CIA.¹⁵¹ While assigned under USOM, the mission of the PEO was to allow the U.S. to assume more direct roles against the communists by providing advisors to two efforts: the counter insurgency (COIN) campaign with the ANL in the south, and the UW campaign against the Pathet Lao and Viet Minh in the north using indigenous

149 Victor Anthony and Richard Sexton, *The War in Northern Laos*. Air Force History Office, 1993. PDF archived at website: http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB248/war_in_northern_laos.pdf, (accessed 16 November 2012). 6; Stanton, *Special Forces at War*, 21.

150 Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) is a designation for American military advisers sent to assist in the training of conventional armed forces of Third World countries. Before and during the Vietnam War, there were three of these groups operating in Southeast Asia. Though the term is not as widespread as it once was, the term MAAG is still used (as well as MILGRPs) in numerous countries.

151 Older military term used to denote a transfer (of an officer) to another post, often away from his parental regimental position [from French *en second* in second rank (or position)] Intelligence term for camouflaging or disguising the true identity of equipment or individuals, especially for the use of military equipment or services--including personnel--in clandestine intelligence activities, generally under the direction of a nonmilitary sponsor.

tribes.¹⁵² Using the indigenous tribes was an extension of the French *Marquis* program the CIA-PEO referred to as the *Auto-Defense* forces. One early PEO UW program was project ERAWAN in 1957 designed to covertly train Laotians in guerrilla and anti-guerrilla tactics. The training was done at CIA established camps across the border in Thailand.¹⁵³ Thai Special Forces units, especially the Police Aerial Reconnaissance Units (PARU), who were organized, trained, and advised by the CIA and Special Forces would continue to support UW operations in Laos as a third country surrogate.¹⁵⁴

One of the issues in the COIN efforts with the ANL was their reported poor training and the lack of willingness to fight on the part of the Laotian soldiers. However, the UW campaign, using the Hmong to fight the communist in the north and conduct cross border attacks into Vietnam was successful by all reports.

In November 1958, U.S. Army Brigadier General John A. Heintges assumed command of the PEO. His plan, approved by Washington, called for a

152 "CIA never promulgated a formal doctrine for operations in the Third World. The working assumptions that guided such activity in Laos and Vietnam were shaped first by the tradition of OSS support to partisan warfare in World War II and second by the experience of Edward Lansdale, an air force officer detailed to CIA, in the campaign against the Huk rebellion in the Philippines in the early 1950s. Agency practice in Third World conflict often featured a search for a charismatic leader who could mobilize his country's political and military resources to defeat the communists." Thomas L. Ahem, Jr. *UNDERCOVER ARMIES: CIA and Surrogate Warfare in Laos 1961–1973*, (Washington D.C.: Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 2006), 5.

153 Kenneth Conboy, *Shadow War*, 24.

154 Thailand assumed the role as a conduit for covert CIA operations in Southeast Asia. Largely through a dummy business firm, the "Southeast Asian Supply Company," the CIA began training Thai police units in guerrilla warfare by the end of 1951. The Thai National Police (TNP) and Police Aerial Reconnaissance Units (PARU) were indispensable liaisons between the Americans and Laos, and helped the CIA develop an anti-communist paramilitary force in Laos. By 1953 there were some 200 CIA officers (former OSS Asia hands) in Thailand, training the Thai in everything from sabotage operations to airborne infiltration. Arne Kislenko, "A Not So Silent Partner: Thailand's Role in Covert Operations, Counter-Insurgency, and the Wars in Indochina," *The Journal of Conflict Studies* XXIV, No. 1, (2004) This relationship with the Thai led to President Eisenhower's approval of the National Security Council Policy Statement 5429/2 on 20 August 54, that recommended the U.S. Government provide military and economic assistance to the Thais and "concentrate efforts on developing Thailand as a support of U.S. objectives in the area and as a focal point of U.S. covert and psychological operations in Southeast Asia." Timothy Neil Castle, *At War in the Shadow of Vietnam: U.S. Military Aid to the Royal Lao Government, 1955–73*, (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1991), 20.

drastic expansion of support to the ANL.¹⁵⁵ Included in the expansion was the authorization for teams of Special Forces who would rotate in on a temporary duty cycle,¹⁵⁶ working under a CIA front company named Eastern Construction Company in Laos (ECCOIL).¹⁵⁷ More than a hundred Filipino guerrilla fighters working as “construction contractors” accompanied the SF teams.¹⁵⁸ The Filipinos were former CIA and Special Forces trained Scout Rangers, guerrilla, and counter-guerrilla fighters seasoned by a recent anti-communist war in their own country. These Filipinos were advised by former OSS officer Edward

155 Memorandum From the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Kocher) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) (December 29, 1958) . Office of the Historian, Department of State website: <http://www.history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v16/d203>, (accessed 05 November 2012).

156 “Unfortunately, the six-month tours hampered efforts to build foreign language proficiency and important professional relationships between the Special Forces soldiers and their trainees.” Timothy Neil Castle, *At War in the Shadow of Vietnam: U.S. Military Aid to the Royal Lao Government, 1955–73*, (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1991), 49.

157 “*Eastern Construction Company [Filipinos]* is a private, Filipino-run employment agency designed for unconventional warfare It now furnishes about 500 trained, experienced Filipino technicians to the Governments of Vietnam and Laos, under the auspices of MAAGs (MAP) and USOMs (CIA activities). Its cadre is mostly either former guerrillas against the Japanese in World War II or former Philippine Army personnel. Most of the cadre had extensive combat experience against the Communist Huk guerrillas in the Philippines. Excerpts from memorandum from Brig. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale, Pentagon expert on guerrilla warfare, to Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, President Kennedy’s military adviser, on “Resources for Unconventional Warfare, SE. Asia,” undated, *The Pentagon Papers*, Gravel Edition, Volume 2, 643–649.

158 Blaufarb, *Organizing and Managing Unconventional Warfare in Laos*, 9.

Lansdale while working for the CIA in the Philippines, and were later brought to Laos and Vietnam as third nation U.S. surrogates.¹⁵⁹

General Heintges DoD plan to increase support to the ANL was matched by the CIA's own plan developed by former OSS Para-military officer James "Bill" Lair. Earlier while assigned to Thailand, Lair advised the Thai police in a CIA program to enhance the organization's ability to deal with threats from the Vietnamese and Lao communists. While working with the Border Police, Lair realized the difficulty in getting Thai officers to the remote border areas where the Communists owned the territory. When there was an attack by Communist guerrillas in the jungles border outstations, it often took a week or more to get reinforcements there. In order to solve the problem Lair worked with the Thai government to create a para-military police unit the Police Aerial Reinforcement Unit (PARU).¹⁶⁰ Through the PARU the CIA increased the support, training, and advisors to the indigenous tribes. The CIA had begun reaching out to the Lao tribes in the hand over from the French *Maquis* and *Auto Defense* Programs. Called *Montagnards* "mountain people" by the French, the indigenous tribes were made up of Hmong (Meo), Kha, Yao (Lu-Mien), and Lao Theung (Lao

¹⁵⁹ The man widely believed to have been the model for Alden Pyle in Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*, Edward G. Lansdale was a Cold War legend. A former advertising executive who worked for the OSS and CIA, he was credited during the 1950s with almost single-handedly preventing a communist takeover of the Philippines and with helping to install Ngo Dinh Diem as president of the American-backed government of South Vietnam. Adding to his notoriety, during the Kennedy administration Lansdale was put in charge of Operation Mongoose, the covert plot to overthrow the government of Cuba's Fidel Castro by assassination or other means. Generally see Edward Geary Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars: An American's Mission to Southeast Asia* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1991); Jonathan Nashel, *Edward Lansdale's Cold War* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005); Sterling Seagrave, *The Marcos Dynasty*, (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1990).

The Hukbalahap Rebellion (1946–1948) was a rebellion staged by former HUKBALAHAP or Hukbong Laban sa Hapon (Anti-Japanese Army) soldiers against the Philippine Government. It started in 1946, after the liberation of the Philippines from Japanese occupation during World War II. Edward Geary Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars: An American's Mission to Southeast Asia* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1991); Jonathan Nashel, *Edward Lansdale's Cold War* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005).

¹⁶⁰ William M. Leary, *CIA Air Operations in Laos, 1955–1974, Supporting the "Secret War"* <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/winter99-00/art7.html#top> (accessed on 20 November 2012).

Saetern).¹⁶¹ After two months of basic militia training the tribes would form into battalions of irregular troops called Special Guerrilla Units. SGUs, normally formed along ethnic lines, underwent an additional three months training by PARU in Phitsanlok, Thailand. The key to the program was General Vang Pao. A talented and ambitious officer, Vang Pao had earlier come to the attention of Americans in April 1957, the PEO had selected him to attend a six-month counterinsurgency training program at the Scout Ranger Base in Manila. Vang Pao's natural leadership made him ideal to become the head of the CIA and Special Forces indigenous army that would be collectively be called the *Armée Clandestine*.

In order to conduct an operation of this scale the CIA turned to its Department of Defense counterpart in unconventional warfare, the U.S. Army Special Forces. In July 1959 as part of General Heintges PEO expansion OP HOTFOOT (alternately called OP MOLECULAR, OP DISALLOW, and OP AMBIDEXTROUS) was approved and tasked to support both the COIN and the UW missions.¹⁶² LTC Arthur "Bull" Simons a U.S. Army Special Forces officer, was selected as its first commander. LTC Simons would become best known as the commander of OP KINGPIN, the attempted rescue of American POWs from a North Vietnamese prison camp in Son Tay.¹⁶³

161 Hmong (also called Mong or Meo) are an Asian ethnic group from the mountainous regions of China, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. Hmong are also one of the sub-groups of the Miao ethnicity in southern China. Hmong groups began a gradual southward migration in the 18th century due to political unrest and to find more arable land. Because the Hmong lived mainly in the highland areas of Southeast Asia and China, the French occupiers of Southeast Asia gave them the name *Montagnards* or "mountain people," but this should not be confused with the Degar people of Vietnam, who were also referred to as *Montagnards*.

162 While under current doctrine these two missions are separate and clearly defined during the 1950s and early 60s the terms were often used interchangeable. Therefore, while some accounts and documents refer to the operation as COIN and others refer to it as UW, research can now delineate between them based on the missions goals and recognize that it was not one or the other but both.

163 Benjamin F. Schemmer, *The Raid: The Son Tay Prison Rescue Mission*, (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2002).

Simons recruited Special Forces soldiers from the Fort Bragg; NC based 77th Special Forces Group¹⁶⁴ to man the operation. After a period of selection and training for the mission, seven SF “A-Teams” (ODA’s) deployed, accompanied by a support staff. They left sans fanfare, in civilian clothes by way of CIA proprietary Air America airlines to Laos and began conducting operations.

As attack and counter attack began to happen throughout the country, moral objections began to be raised against what had become in fact a Laotian civil war. On 9 August 1960, the commanding officer of the elite Second Paratroop Battalion of the ANL seized power in Vientiane. Captain Kong Le announced to the world powers involved that Laos was returning to a policy of neutrality demanding that Prince Souvanna Phouma be reinstated as the rightful Prime Minister. The king agreed to his demands but the U.S. backed General Phoumi former defense minister refused to acknowledge Prince Phouma as the rightful ruler and withdrew to central Laos where he fomented opposition to the new government. Kong Le began to receive support from the USSR, showcasing a Soviet brand of spreading communism looking to become more proactive in South East Asia. The U.S. continued to back General Phoumi now consolidating power in central Laos and four months later, in December of 1960; U.S. Special Forces advised ANL units under General Phoumi recaptured the capital. In a violent three-day battle, the U.S. backed units forced Kong Le to retreat. Kong Le escaped, via Soviet aircraft, to the communist controlled sanctuary of northern Laos.¹⁶⁵

As the fighting with the communists increased, and the U.S. Special Forces and CIA advisors became more directly involved in combat operations, the difficulty in hiding U.S. involvement became more difficult as combat casualties began to raise questions. In 1961 the U.S. publically acknowledged

164 Redesignated as the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) on 20 May 1960 COL Donald Blackburn, one of the founders of Special Forces along with McClure, Volckmann, and Banks, commanded the 77th SF Group and choose Bull Simmons for the first rotation in to Laos. Mike Guardia, *Shadow Commander: The Epic Story of Donald D. Blackburn-Guerrilla Leader and Special Forces Hero*, (New York, NY: Casemate Pub, 2011).

165 Blaufarb, *Organizing and Managing Unconventional Warfare in Laos*, 4.

the military advisory efforts in Laos. An overt Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) was established, effectively replacing the clandestine PEO. The MAAG was openly assigned to the embassy and, to the public, its mission focused more on COIN than the UW side of the operation. OP HOTFOOT was renamed OP WHITE STAR.¹⁶⁶ In December 1961, in an effort to harass the enemy's bases and primary overland resupply route in the Laotian plateau, the Special Forces advisors shifted away from their primary mission with the ANL and began training Kha tribesman under Operation PINCUSHION.¹⁶⁷

One year later, in 1962, a second Geneva accord was signed by the stakeholders agreeing to cease open military involvement in Laos. This forced a return to a more low visibility approach by the U.S.. The week before the deadline to remove its troops, 666 U.S. military personnel left Laos through UN checkpoints manned by International Control Commission (ICC) observers. This ended the acknowledged U.S. military operations in Laos. The overt MAAG was replaced with an organization similar to the former PEO, the USAID "Requirements Office," which continued the ongoing clandestine activities. Following the MAAGs departure, all remaining military advisers were attached to the U.S. embassy in Vientiane as military attachés under a CIA program called "Project 404."

In 1963, in response to an increase of NVA regulars in Laos, the Kennedy administration authorized the CIA to increase the size of the Hmong army. Almost a year later, 20,000 Hmong, led by CIA paramilitary (PM) officers and SF soldiers, conducted guerrilla operations: destroying Viet Minh supply depots, ambushing trucks, mining roads, and generally harassing the stronger enemy force. This increase allowed for follow on operations designed to interdict Communist logistical lines along the Ho Chi Minh Trail under the Studies and

¹⁶⁶ The terms "operation" (OP) and "project" were interchangeable in both HOTFOOT and WHITE STAR, existing records and first hand accounts use both depending on the time period and the source. This would become more standardized with the CIA developing cryptonyms for country codes and operations in the following years.

¹⁶⁷ Stanton, *Special Forces at War*, 22.

Observations Group (SOG).¹⁶⁸ Made up of select Special Forces volunteers, many who transferred from OP WHITESTAR, SOG's initial mission was to take over the clandestine agent cross-border program that the CIA had been running for several years against North Vietnam. Ultimately the CIA ended its operations in Laos after the 1973 peace agreements were signed.

History is inconclusive if the "Secret War" in Laos was the tipping point for the U.S. in Southeast Asia. Laos was the unconventional warfare operation that became a successful handing off point, passing the baton from the OSS legacy officers to the next generation of men who would fill the CIA and Special Forces. With over a decade of involvement, the shared experiences from Laos became the pool of knowledge for techniques, tactics, and networking that would shape a new legacy of unconventional warfare capabilities.

3. Analysis

The following sections of this chapter will highlight significant factors that were influential in the decision to embark on unconventional warfare operations in Laos in contrast to the other two general options of no military action, or conventional military action. These factors are categorized into internal enablers, internal constraints, external enablers, and external constraints.¹⁶⁹

a. Decision Point

In order to better analyze the environment in which decision makers supported unconventional warfare in Laos, the decision point must be identified.

168 John Plaster, *SOG: The Secret War's of America's Commandos in Vietnam*, NAL Trade; Reprint edition (New York, NY: New American Library, 2010); Roger Warner, *Shooting at the Moon: The Story of America's Clandestine War in Laos*, 1st. paperback edition (Hanover, NH: Steerforth; 1998).

169 Enablers are arguments for action, either oppose no military action, or support UW over conventional military action. Constraints are arguments for no action, or they argue for the use of conventional military action over UW. The internal domain is that which is driven by the U.S.. This is a function of popular opinion or support (important due to the U.S. status as a democracy), capability, capacity, or leadership. The external domain is that outside of the U.S.. This includes the "targeted country's" internal activities and circumstance, world events and reaction, and, perhaps the most heavily weighted, peer competitors' actions, capacity, and capability.

In the case of Laos, the two periods that surround the decision point are 1957, and 1959 and are representative of two different levels in input, throughput, and output. The left of the decision point, captures the essence of a continued steady-state level of activity, initiated with the establishment of the Program Evaluation Office in 1955 and continued through 1957. Although not a definitive shaping event, in 1957 the PEO initiated project ERAWAN to train Laotians in guerilla and anti-guerilla tactics in Thailand. This marks a point prior to increased allocation of resources on behalf of the U.S. Additionally, an external event that shaped or necessitated a decision was the increased activity in Laos by the Pathet Lao to support Viet Minh efforts in building a logistical support structure that affected the on-going insurgency in South Vietnam. The two routes to move personnel between the North and South Vietnam, primarily used by the north to prepare for the upcoming elections, were by sea on the east coast and by land through Laos. As the U.S. Navy began interdictions, the overland route in Laos saw an increase in activity. The post-decision period is marked by the deployment of Special Forces “A” teams, led by LTC Simons, and the initiation of Operation HOT FOOT in 1959. In 1960, the short lived success of the Kong Le coup marked an increased in enemy activity, but SF advised units cleared the capital and drove Kong Le from power, marking an increase in capability for the ANL.

The two operations, ERAWAN in 1957 and HOT FOOT in 1959, serve as bookends, framing the decision point that occurred roughly during 1958. The first actions taken that *indicate* a decision was made were the appointment of General Heintges to take over the PEO, and the approval of the plan he carried in hand. This was subsequently recorded in history by the memorandum from the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, Kocher, to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Robertson, dated December 29, 1958. The “Heintges Plan” marks an increase in activity in Laos, on behalf of the U.S., however, it was a supporting effort to CIA and DoS efforts. The same year CIA PM officer Bill Lair also proposed the increase of the indigenous tribal

operations started by the French. The recruitment of Vang Pao and increase from the *Maquis* or *Auto-Defense* militias into the SGUs and the *Armée Clandestine* show a marked increase as well (see Figure 9).

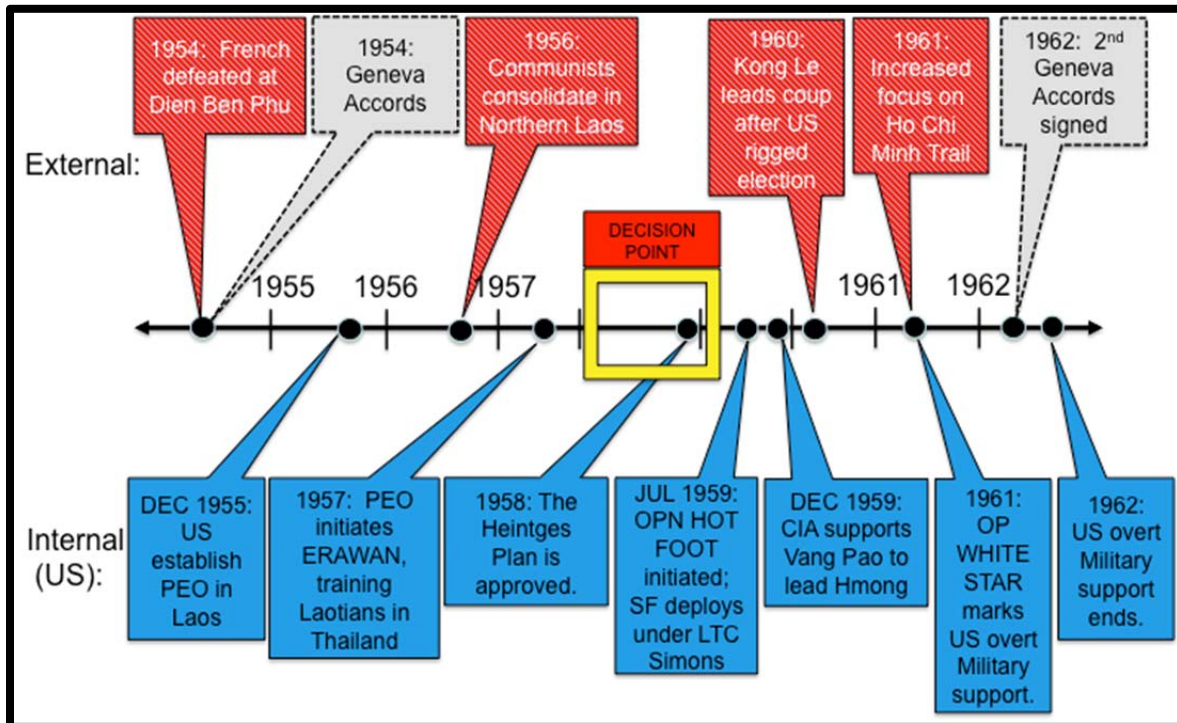


Figure 9. Decision Point Timeline for Laos

b. Internal Enablers

Establishing an Interventionist Strategy. The outbreak of Korean War on June 25, 1950 marked a sustained U.S. commitment towards containment. The North Korean attack on South Korea increased the U.S. determination to resist communism. It brought U.S. attention towards Asia and also Southeast Asia. The French struggle in Indochina began to be seen as an integral part of the containment of communism.

The decision to increase U.S. involvement in Indochina was put in motion on April 24, 1950 when President Truman approved National Security Council (NSC) 64. The policy took the position that the U.S. should take all

practicable measures in order to prevent any further communist expansion in Southeast Asia. Indochina, the key area of Southeast Asia, was perceived to be under immediate threat. Under Eisenhower's administration NSC 162/2 was made policy on 30 October 1953. It reiterated that Indochina was of such strategic importance by stating that an attack on it would "compel the United States to react with military force either locally at the point of attack, or generally against the military power of the aggressors."¹⁷⁰ Additionally, President Eisenhower's policy underscored by NSC 162/2 would be deemed U.S. influence in the third world as critical in countering the growth of Soviet expansion and influence. Identifying neutral countries and convincing them to join the U.S. in a stand against Communism was a prime effort for the DoS. NSC 162/2 identified Indochina as key terrain and had shaping effects on the operations that would begin in Laos.¹⁷¹

The Operation Supported A Marketable Narrative. The "second Red scare," occurred in the United States from 1950–56 and was led by Wisconsin's Senator Joseph McCarthy. Thousands of Americans were accused of communism, subversion, and espionage, indicative of the fear the public held that the Soviets were winning the ideological battle against democracy and capitalism. The anti-communism narrative clutched the American public and supplemented U.S. national policy that was aimed to counter and meet the challenges posed by the Soviets and the Communist Chinese. In Laos, the neutralist faction was being challenged by the pro-communist faction, an easy fight to justify American support. Based on the popular stance against communism in the U.S., it was not a hard sell to the American public that the U.S. should support this fledgling country in its confrontation with communism.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ A report to the National Security Council, dated October 30th, 1953, 9 section 13.b Retrieved from website: <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-162-2.pdf>, (accessed 06 November 2012).

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ellen Schrecker, *The Age Of McCarthyism: A Brief History With Documents* "The Growth of the Anti-Communist Network," (Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1994) <http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/anticom-network.html>, (accessed 25 November 2012).

UW Experienced Individuals Influential to the President. The Dulles brothers both held key positions within the Eisenhower cabinet. In addition to the ease in cooperation that would trickle down to their respective subordinates, many who were part of the OSS legacy, their collaborative efforts brought successes from TP AJAX in Iran in 1953 and continued through PB SUCCESS in Guatemala circa 1954 and beyond.¹⁷³

UW Successes Increased Influence on Decision Makers. The “successful” covert operations led by the CIA began with the coup in Iran in protection of British and French oil companies named TP AJAX. Following Iran was the more challenging but equally successful PB SUCCESS, waged in Guatemala from 1952–54.¹⁷⁴ Operations ST CIRCUS and BARNUM in Tibet, developing simultaneously with the operations in Laos, were another sign of CIA capability. This building reliance brought credibility to the agency and their abilities, and, coupled with Eisenhower’s policies (such as NSC 162/2), these types of operations were just the answer for a tough stance on Communism and ratcheting down on U.S. spending. Edward Lansdale’s success in the Philippines fighting the Communist Huk Rebellion and the third party Filipino Scout Ranger surrogates the ECCOIL, Bill Lairs success in Thailand (with Wild Bill Donovan as Ambassador) led to the development of the Thai PARU another key third nation surrogate force used in Laos.

Experienced UW Organization Existed. As discussed in the analysis of Tibet, the decommissioning of the OSS provided a large body of civilian and military personnel, with institutionalized knowledge and experience, to migrate into the CIA and other military units. Key personnel, from case officers, regional desk officers, and directors in the CIA were shaped by their experience during the partisan warfare campaign of World War II. Similarly, Colonel Aaron Banks, former member of the OSS, became the first commander of the Army’s

¹⁷³ Nicholas Cullather. *Operation PBSUCCESS: The United States and Guatemala 1952–1954*. (Washington DC: History Staff Center for the Study of Intelligence, CIA, 1994).

¹⁷⁴ Cullather, *Operation PBSUCCESS*.

Special Forces in 1952.¹⁷⁵ Banks, as well as Volckmann and Blackburn, brought World War II and Korean War partisan warfare experience to the new unit.¹⁷⁶ Laos would become one of the first testing grounds for the new military unit. The resident knowledge that transferred from the OSS to the CIA and Army Special Forces would enhance the viability of a UW option in Laos, namely by the credibility that most of these men had from their World War II days. Many of the CIA Para-military officers, Bill Lair, Tony Poe and others as well as many of the Special Forces soldiers; Donald Blackburn, Jon Singlaub were in the OSS or resistance groups in Word War II.

A New Army Capability. By expanding throughput, a greater potential output is generated. By developing Army Special Forces, and specific capabilities, it is said the intentions to use them are built too. In 1952, Colonel Aaron Bank assumed command of the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne). This unit, and the subsequent SF Groups that would follow, was designed to maximize capability in partisan warfare. Current day fact sheets from U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne) state, “The cornerstone of the SF Group’s capability is the Operational Detachment-Alpha or ODA, a team of twelve Special Forces “Green Berets.” Cross-trained in weapons, communications, intelligence, medicine, and engineering, the ODA member also possesses specialized language and cultural training.”¹⁷⁷ Since the Army had developed this new capability, its own “para-military” force to fight alongside or against guerilla forces; the concept was only waiting to be proven in battle. Laos would prove an opportune environment.

175 Aaron Bank, *From OSS to Green Beret: The Birth of Special Forces*. (Presidio, CA: Presidio Press, 1986).

176 Mike Guardia, *American Guerrilla: The Forgotten Heroics of Russell W. Volckmann*, (Casemate Pub; 2010), and Mike Guardia, *Shadow Commander: The Epic Story of Donald D. Blackburn-Guerrilla Leader and Special Forces Hero*, (New York, NY: Casemate, 2011).

177 U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne) Fact Sheet <http://www.soc.mil/UNS/Fact%20Sheets/USASFC.pdf>, (accessed 05 November 2012).

c. External Enablers

External Conditions Necessitated U.S. Action Based On Interventionist Strategy. U.S. State and Defense Departments assessment was that the Russian, Chinese, and North Vietnamese, were not honoring the Geneva Agreements of 1954, therefore, the Eisenhower administration decided to bolster American influence in Laos with a substantial influx of foreign aid, and also not honoring the accords. As early as 1958, the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese Army forces began seizing key terrain in Laos to support a vast resupply network to infiltrate men, supplies, and equipment into South Vietnam.¹⁷⁸ The Ho Chi Minh Trail bypassed the direct route over the border from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. Instead, the trail system traveled westward, through the kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia. The numerous offshoots then spilled into South Vietnam, crossing the border from “neutral countries” and, designed or not, legally precluded the direct interdiction by the U.S. due to sovereignty issues. The trail system would receive more use by the North Vietnamese due to U.S. naval interdiction in the Gulf of Tonkin, limiting maritime resupply routes into South Vietnam. As the neighboring Vietnam Conflict was gaining more U.S. attention, force escalation grew. After the first introduction of U.S. advisors under President Truman in 1950, the expansion of advisors tripled from 760 in 1959 to 3205 in 1961, and again in 1962 reaching a total of 11,300 advisors. U.S. forces began a “combat role” in 1965, and reached a high water mark during 1968, with over 536,000 U.S. troops on the ground in South Vietnam.¹⁷⁹

In 1958, roughly the decision point to expand operations in Laos, the Vietnam Conflict was gaining momentum. According to Douglas Blaufarb in a Rand sponsored study for the Department of Defense, “U.S. goals were to unify all non-Communist political groups and to strengthen them militarily and

178 John Prados, *The Blood Road*, (New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, 1998), 24.

179 Allied Troop Levels: Vietnam 1960–1973. From 25th Aviation website: http://25thaviation.org/facts/id430.htm#allied_troop_levels_vietnam_1960_to , (accessed 05 November 2012).

economically to a point where Laos would become a firm Anti-communist “bastion” on the border of China and Vietnam.”¹⁸⁰

The Covert Nature of UW Allows U.S. Circumvention. UW remained a military option in Laos and was favored based on the 1954 Accords. While the U.S. did not sign the Geneva Accords of 1954 that ushered France out of the colonial business in Indochina, it did agree to respect the terms of the agreements. Overtly, the U.S. could not provide the support it believed was required to stop the spread of communism to neighboring Thailand, Cambodia, and South Vietnam, precluding mass mobilization and deployments of conventional forces to deter the Communists. UW could affect conditions necessary to achieve this; it allowed the United States, in Laos to circumvent the 1954 Geneva Accords. Reasoning to self impose the agreements may have been out of fear that other signatories of the 54 accords would use U.S. actions as grounds to break agreements. Nevertheless, the U.S. was able to continue shaping/influencing conditions in Laos via the covert nature of UW.

d. Internal Constraints

U.S. Capacity. Due to the requirements of standing forces in Western Europe to keep the USSR at bay, and maintaining a force capable to answer any resumption of military activity on the Korean Peninsula, U.S. conventional military forces were stretched thin. The New Look policy was shifting the emphasis of new growth into nuclear deterrence and capability away from cost prohibitive standing ground forces.¹⁸¹ This led to limitations in conventional ground forces available for deployment in Laos. Additionally, the public was largely unwilling to openly engage in another war on the “Asian Landmass.” Many Americans were uncomfortable with the “draw” in Korea and believed all wars should end like World War II –unconditional surrender.

¹⁸⁰ Douglas Blaufarb, *Organizing and Managing Unconventional Warfare in Laos*, (Santa Monica, CA: Advanced Research Projects Agency, Rand,1972), 2.

¹⁸¹ Wolk, “The New Look.”

e. External Constraints

Legality. The signatories of the 1954 Geneva Accord pledged to respect Laotian neutrality, to refrain from interference, direct or indirect, in the internal affairs of Laos, and to refrain from drawing Laos into military alliance or to establish military bases in Laotian territory.¹⁸²

Escalation. The Soviet and U.S. strategy and capacity was centered on mutually assured destruction through a complex nuclear arsenal delivered by both sides. Communist regional escalation could, in turn, draw Soviet support thus effectively raising the risk of potential nuclear war. This would limit U.S. activity in Laos to unconventional warfare and preclude the introduction of conventional ground forces to the situation.

Instigating China. U.S. conventional forces, if introduced in Laos, could have prodded PRC massing on their shared border with Laos. As seen in the Korean conflict, PRC intent to maintain a buffer between their own and U.S. conventional forces in Laos could further strain regional powers, pushing them closer to a conventional clash. The introduction of U.S. conventional forces in Laos, therefore, came at additional costs-beyond those of mobilization, deployment, and logistic demands.

4. Summary

In Laos, unconventional warfare was approved for internal reasons such as policy, specifically NSC 162/2, as well as the same fiscal constraints seen in the case of Tibet, imposed by the modernization initiated by Eisenhower's "New Look." Further, the winning record enjoyed by the CIA since Iran, the opportunity to battle-test the Army's new Special Forces capability, and the OSS legacy, now emerging also in the ranks of the Special Forces, potentially drove decision makers to embark on a UW campaign in Laos. Externally, the increased regional U.S. activity in Southeast Asia, the legal imperative precluding conventional

¹⁸² Douglas Blaufarb, *Organizing and Managing Unconventional Warfare in Laos*, (Santa Monica, CA: Advanced Research Projects Agency, Rand, 1972), 1.

military intervention, and the need to set conditions in Laos to shape the greater region provided ample justification for intervention by unconventional warfare.

In this chapter, a case of synthetic-resistance has been examined, the next chapter will follow the case selection of UW in Nicaragua, an example of *Organic -Revolution*. Nicaragua occurred late in the Cold War, after the Vietnam War, and after changes in legislation altered the way unconventional warfare was waged by the U.S.

D. CASE IV: NICARAGUA 1981–1986¹⁸³

1. Introduction

U.S. support for the Contra rebels in their efforts to overthrow the Sandinista Nicaraguan government is a well-known chapter in U.S. history, and yet is often overlooked as a case of U.S.-sponsored unconventional warfare. Many lessons learned and operational experience from the U.S. unconventional warfare campaign and support of the Nicaragua Contras is overshadowed by the questionable activities that are associated with this operation. This case was selected as representative of *Organic-Revolution* movements, and is the only Latin American case in this work. The Nicaraguan rebels had a long legacy of internal power struggles and revolts prior to the U.S. involvement. However, despite being an internal conflict, U.S. sponsorship was provided in order to shape regional affairs in support of U.S. interests.

The Nicaragua UW operation happened toward the latter part of the Cold War, giving the study a wider range of possible variables that may not have been present in earlier cases. By the start of Nicaragua, both the CIA and Special Forces were at the height of their levels of experience in unconventional warfare. Both organizations still had their share of “old Asia hands” those who earned their experience in Vietnam and Laos, as well as those that participated in a number of other UW operations in the Cold War. Unlike earlier cases in this work, which followed closer to the victory of World War II Nicaragua takes place after the U.S. withdrew from South Vietnam.

2. Background

Located midway between Mexico and Colombia, Nicaragua is a small nation bordered by Honduras to the north and Costa Rica to the south. Nicaragua had a violent history of external powers vying for control of its natural

¹⁸³ While the dates listed 1981–1986 reflect the dates of the U.S. sponsorship in the UW campaign, the relationships developed prior with the Hondurans and Argentinians allowed for safe havens and third nation advisors who were vital to the initial plan.

resources and attempting to break the will of its population. First conquered by the Spanish in the early 16th century, it became a protectorate of the United Kingdom from 1655 to 1850, was ruled by an American that declared himself king in 1856, and then occupied by the U.S. from 1912 to 1933. Nicaragua entered the 20th century with a legacy of revolutionary warfare.¹⁸⁴

When the U.S. military departed in 1933 they left behind a loyal U.S. trained Guardia Nacional (National Guard), a combined military and police force. Together with the Somoza family dictatorship, the National Guard kept power for the next fifty years through brutal methods. The 1979 assassination of a journalist, who was critical of the regime, set off a protest that could not be put down. Backed by the Cubans, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, or FSLN), commonly known as the Sandinistas, ousted the Somoza regime in a violent revolution and established a new communist government in the city of Managua.¹⁸⁵ Within the first year, several opposition groups sprung up to revolt against the communist Sandinista government.¹⁸⁶ The largest of these groups was made up of former National

184 William Walker was a U.S. lawyer, journalist and adventurer, who organized several private military expeditions into Latin America, with the intention of establishing English-speaking colonies under his personal control, an enterprise then known as “filibustering.” Walker became ruler of the Republic of Nicaragua in 1856 and ruled until 1857, when he was defeated by a coalition of Central American armies, principally Costa Rica’s army.

By the definitions outlined in this research the U.S. sponsored UW operation against the Nicaragua FSLN is categorized as *organic* and *revolutionary*, throughout this chapter source terms such as *insurgency* or *guerrilla* may be used to keep integrity with source material, however, these terms are not to be confused with the definitions as explained in the methods section of this research.

http://www.brown.edu/Research/Understanding_the_Iran_Contra_Affair/timeline-nicaragua.php (accessed on 28 October 2012).

185 Cuban assistance was involved in uniting the Sandinista movement, providing arms, training and intelligence and played a significant role in building an internal security apparatus modeled after the Cuban system under Castro. See John Norton Moore, *The Secret War in Central America: Sandinista Assault on World Order* (Frederick: University Publications of America, 1987), p. 11. Edgar Chamorro, *International Court Justice Case Concerning Military And Paramilitary Activities in and Against Nicaragua* (Nicaragua vs. United States of America), 5 September 1985, 2.

186 Christopher Paul, et al. “Victory Has a Thousand Fathers,” *Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*, (Santa Monica CA: RAND Corporation, 2010), 67.

Guard soldiers, exiled and living across the border in Honduras.¹⁸⁷ Poorly equipped and unorganized, the former guardsmen survived by raiding small villages and stealing cattle.

The U.S. saw the FSLN takeover of Nicaragua as a stepping-stone for a larger Communist expansion in Latin America. The potential for Communists establishing a base on the mainland of Central America, if realized, represented the worst of Cold War fears.¹⁸⁸ President Carter initially tried to influence the new Nicaraguan government by providing \$99 million USD in foreign aid as an attempt to turn them pro-U.S.. The FSLN responded by openly signing economic, cultural, technological, and scientific agreements with the USSR. President Carter, prompted by the FSLN agreements, then authorized the CIA to take limited steps in organizing any organic resistance movement, through the use of propaganda, and specifically prohibited armed action.¹⁸⁹

In 1981, Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as the 40th president of the United States. Clear on his stance against Communism, President Reagan took two steps towards Nicaragua; first, he cut off all foreign aid from the U.S. to the Sandinista Government, and second, he signed a Presidential finding authorizing paramilitary covert action.¹⁹⁰ While there were those in the administration that felt otherwise the Presidents biggest supporter was his former campaign

¹⁸⁷ It is generally acknowledged that as of 1980 there were five separate Sandinista resistance groups. While most sources claim the National Guard (Somoza Guardia) was the largest, other sources claim MILPAS (Milicias Populares Anti-Sandinistas) was larger and better trained. See Timothy Charles Brown, *The Real Contra War: Highlander Peasant Resistance in Nicaragua*, (University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 4.

¹⁸⁸ Duane R. Clarridge, *A Spy For All Seasons: My Life in the CIA*, (New York, NY: Scribner, 1997), 195.

¹⁸⁹ In November 1979, President Carter issued a covert action finding authorizing training and other resources for moderate elements in El Salvador resisting these guerilla elements.

Derived from Global Security website, "Central America 1979–86." <http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/ops/centam.htm> Accessed 12 November 2012. Also Bob Woodward, *Veil: Secret Wars of the CIA 1981–1987*, (New York NY: Simon and Shuster, 1987), 113.

¹⁹⁰ Ronald Reagan, *Secret Presidential Finding*, from the National Security Archive's Nicaragua collection, Dated 1 December 1981, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/publications/nicaragua/nicaragua.html#LIST>, (accessed on 22 October 2012).

manager and director of the CIA William Casey.¹⁹¹ Shortly after taking office, Reagan appointed Casey as Director of Central Intelligence. Stansfield Turner, the former director who Casey replaced dubbed it the 'Resurrection of Wild Bill', referring to Bill Donovan, the head of OSS in World War II¹⁹² Casey was the last OSS member to lead the CIA and drove a re-expansion of the funding, personnel, and covert activity levels greater than those existing in the preceding Carter Administration.

Given the green light under Casey, the CIA established contact with the Union Democratica Nicaragüense (UDN) a Nicaraguan political group in exile, actively lobbying for support in Miami. The CIA convinced them to help the CIA merge the numerous resistance groups, all fighting the Sandinista FSLN forces, into one entity. The Nicaraguan Revolutionary Democratic Alliance (ADREN) and its military arm, the *15th of September Legion*,¹⁹³ was made up of former National guardsmen and the Segovian highlander peasants, known as the *Militias Populares Anti-Somolistas* (people's Anti-Somoza Militias, or MILPAs).¹⁹⁴ In early 1982 the UDN and the ADREN joined to become the *Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense* or Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN). Initially, the new organization continued to use the name *15th of September Legion* for the organization's military arm, but would soon refer to themselves as *Comandos*. In the U.S. they would be known as the *Contras*.¹⁹⁵

191 Secretary of State Alexander Haig was a supporter of conventional warfare actions against Nicaragua. See John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars*, (New York, NY: William Morrow & Co, 1986), 398.

192 Turner was critical of Casey and intended the comments to be an insult rather than a compliment. From Stansfield Turner, *Burn Before Reading: Presidents, CIA Directors, and Secret Intelligence* (New York: Hyperion, 2005), 191, 195–196.

193 15th of September is generally celebrated as Nicaraguan Independence Day.

194 Brown, *Contra War*, 13.

195 The term "contra" comes from the Spanish *contra*, which means against but in this case is short for *la contra-revolucion*, in English "the counter-revolution." Some rebels disliked being called *contras*, feeling that it defined their cause only in negative terms, or implied a desire to restore the old order. Rebel fighters usually referred to themselves as *comandos* (commandos); peasant sympathizers also called the rebels *los primos* (the cousins). From the mid-1980s, as the Reagan administration and the rebels sought to portray the movement as the "democratic resistance," members described themselves as *la Resistencia*.

Initially the CIA worked through third nation proxies. Argentina provided trainers and combat advisers, Honduras allowed the Contras to use its border areas as safe haven operating base for the guerrilla force, and Israel provided both trainers and the contacts for arms sales.¹⁹⁶ The initial Contra operations into Nicaragua consisted of hit-and-run missions. Their first success, in March of the same year, FDN saboteurs blew up two vital bridges in northern Nicaragua at Rio Negro and Ocotal.

Although outside of the local area of Nicaragua, the Falklands War began on 2 April 1982, and was a shaping event. Argentine troops landed in the Falkland Islands in an effort to retake the island, resulting in a war against Britain. Argentine intelligence officers had been working with the CIA to help train, but not fund, the Contras in Nicaragua. The Argentine government believed it might be rewarded for this activity by non-interference on the part of the U.S. in the conflict. In the end the U.S. gave full support to the UK, critics of the U.S. role claimed that, by failing to side with Argentina, the U.S. violated its own Monroe Doctrine.¹⁹⁷ When the Argentinians withdrew their support the CIA began to take a more active role in training and advising the Contras.¹⁹⁸

196 Israel has denied their official involvement however several of the known principles in the arms sales and contacts between the CIA and Argentina and later Iran were known “former” Mossad agents. See generally Jonathan Marshall, Peter Dale Scott, Jane Hunter, *The Iran-Contra Connection: Secret Teams and Covert Operations in Reagan Era*, (Cambridge: South End Press, 1987); Bob Woodward, *Veil: Secret Wars of the CIA 1981–1987*, (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1987), 117.

197 BBC documentary, *The Falklands War and the White House*. David R. Mares, *Violent Peace*, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2001), 156.

198 Edgar Chamorro, *International Court Justice Case Concerning Military And Paramilitary Activities in and Against Nicaragua* (Nicaragua vs. United States of America), 5 September 1985, 7.

There was a difference in how the President and Congress viewed the mission. According to the Reagan Doctrine,¹⁹⁹ the U.S. could “roll back” and diminish Soviet influence around the world by providing overt or covert support to anti-communist movements, assisting them to “free themselves.” However, Congress was fearful that increased support in Nicaragua would start an all-out war between the numerous Latin American states involved, reminiscent of the escalation in Vietnam. While Congress was unable to completely stop U.S. support to the Contras without passing new laws, they could amend legislation to limit the CIA’s funding and how it would be used. The *Boland Amendment*, named for the Massachusetts Democrat Representative who authored it, was a series of three U.S. legislative amendments passed between 1982 and 1984, in an attempt to reign in U.S. activity in Nicaragua. The first Boland Amendment was to the House Appropriations Bill of 1982, and was attached as a rider to the Defense Appropriations Act of 1983. The House of Representatives passed the Defense Appropriations Act 411–0 on December 8, 1982 and was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on December 21, 1982.²⁰⁰ The amendments attempted to limit U.S. government assistance to the Contras in Nicaragua by limiting how money would be spent and the amount. They limited the CIA’s involvement on interdicting the FSLN support for El Salvadorian rebel groups, specifically prohibiting funds to be used for overthrowing the Sandinista

199 The Reagan Doctrine was a strategy orchestrated and implemented by the United States under the Reagan Administration to oppose the global influence of the Soviet Union during the final years of the Cold War. While the doctrine lasted less than a decade, it was the centerpiece of United States foreign policy from the early 1980s until the end of the Cold War in 1991. The counter argument to this doctrine was that most Third World struggles take place in arenas and involve issues far removed from legitimate American security needs. U.S. involvement in such conflicts expands the republic’s already overextended commitments without achieving any significant prospective gains. U.S. covert policy in Nicaragua was an application of the Reagan administration’s doctrine of “low-intensity-conflict” (LIC) that depended upon the successful integration and coordination of U.S. covert political, economic, diplomatic and military actions. The roots of low-intensity-conflict can be traced to the late 1950s and early 1960s, with full expression in the counterinsurgency doctrines of the Kennedy administration. In order to accomplish its containment tasks, the United States had to adopt a novel approach involving the entire civilian and military foreign affairs apparatus. Special Forces who have intensive training and experience in insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare have carried out the bulk of U.S. low- intensity-conflict missions.

200 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) From: <http://redbook.gao.gov/14/fl0067296.php>, (assessed on 22 October 2012).

government. Until the withdrawal of the Argentinian advisers, the CIA's support to the Contras was limited to training, directing operations, and air support. In a throwback to operations in Laos, the CIA used contracted "civilian" aircraft for reconnaissance, to move small elements around the dense jungle battlefield, and to airdrop supplies to Contras operating in Sandinista held territory the most well known of these air operations were run by Southern Air Transport (SAT).²⁰¹

Over the first term of the Reagan administration, the Contras grew from less than a thousand members, to a force of twenty thousand. The CIA brought in weapons and supplies, established logistical infrastructure, provided intelligence and training, as well as general overall strategic planning. The rebel's first trial by fire was during major combat operations, launched from their Honduran safe haven, into northern Nicaragua. Although earlier guerrilla, small unit, and hit-and-run attacks were successful, the CIA's attempt to transition the force to more conventional operations was a failure.²⁰² The Contra offensive met heavy FSLN resistance. Despite the CIA-led training and planning of the operation, the Contras, over a thousand strong, were forced to scatter and retreat. FSLN regular forces pursued them to the northern border but did not cross into Honduras.²⁰³

In February 1983, the U.S. began to conduct joint military exercises in Honduras; BIG PINE, followed by BIG PINE II and III, UNIVERSAL TREK, and

201 Southern Air Transport (SAT) airlines. SAT was a CIA proprietary airline similar to the CIA Southeast Asia airlines *CAT air*, which began as a support mechanism for operations in Tibet in the 1950s (ST BARNUM), but is best known for the support for CIA operations in Laos under its newer name *Air America*. SAT airlines were the vehicle of choice for both the private contra aid operation, and the delivery of U.S. arms to Iran in 1985–86. John Prados, *Presidents Secret Wars*, 402.

202 Numerous sources cite this fail to transition. Edgar Chamorro one of the principle leaders of the Contras wrote, "By the end of 1982, we were ready to launch our first major military offensive designed to take and hold Nicaraguan territory, which the C.I.A. urging us to do. Our principal objective was the town of Jalapa in northern Nicaragua. More than 1,000 of our fighters were involved, and we used light artillery supplied by the C.I.A. in combat for the first time." Edgar Chamorro, "International Court Justice Case Concerning Military And Paramilitary Activities in and Against Nicaragua" (Nicaragua vs. United States of America, 5 September 1985), 7.

203 Edgar Chamorro, "International Court Justice Case Concerning Military And Paramilitary Activities in and Against Nicaragua" (Nicaragua vs. United States of America, 5 September 1985), 7–8.

NEW HORIZONS. While these “exercises” helped to develop the relationship with pro-U.S. partner nations in the region, they also allowed the CIA to use other funding and authorities earmarked for Defense Department exercises to build critical infrastructure that could be used to support the Contras as well. Airfields for CIA-SAT air support, a radar communications site south of Tegucigalpa, and the Regional Training Center (Centro Regional de Entrenamiento Militar, or CREM) that would be home to the DoD’s semi-permanent presence in the region the Joint Task Force-Bravo (JTF-Bravo), were all funded under bilateral exercises.²⁰⁴

The Regional Training Center was established to provide “ground force” training to pro-U.S. partner nations in the Southern Command (SouthCom) area of operations. In addition to the support personnel, CREM was assigned a hundred man Special Forces adviser Mobile Training Team (MTT) element. Normally broken down into four to six man operational teams, the MTT was tasked to support various guerrilla and counter guerrilla operations.²⁰⁵

The CIA’s frustrations with the Contras’ inability to transition from small unit tactics into a conventional military force, capable of achieving strategic military objectives, became increasingly an issue.²⁰⁶ Coupled with growing resistance from Congress, U.S. activity led to more and more reliance on unilateral U.S. options. The early 1980s were a huge growth period for U.S. military Special Operations Forces, and there was no better place to put these

²⁰⁴ Russell J. Hall, *Joint Task Force-Bravo: A Case Study in Military Operations Other Than War*, (U.S. Army War College Research Paper, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 1998), 8–9.

²⁰⁵ The SF Military/Mobile Training Team (MTT) platform provided a vehicle for training and advisory assistance since the late 1950s; it also served as the ideal vehicle for low-intensity conflict operations (FID and UW) from Laos to Nicaragua. MTT’s became the tool of choice for the Cold War, more than 130 Special Forces MTTs deployed worldwide in 1982 alone. See generally; Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counterterrorism, 1940–1990*, online <http://www.statecraft.org/chapter15.html>, (accessed on 23 October 2012).

²⁰⁶ John Prados, *Presidents Secret Wars*, 410.

units to the test than the *Cold War* heating up in their own backyard. Besides the SF MTT's conducting training and advisory missions, several other SOF units joined the fight.

The Pentagon's newly formed covert Special Operations Division (SOD),²⁰⁷ and the U.S. Army Intelligence Support Activity (USAISA, also known as ISA or ROYAL CAPE), were used to funnel covert military aid, funding, and personnel when the Boland Amendments' restrictions forced too much oversight upon the CIA. SOD worked closely with the CIA, and was instrumental in ferrying Army Special Forces personnel under cover into Honduras. SOD ran Operations SEA SPRAY, YELLOW FRUIT, and ROOKS LANDING,²⁰⁸ and provided the agency with SF personnel for unilateral operations. Similarly, ISA ran OP QUEENS HUNTER (QUASAR TALENT, GRAZING LAWN, and GRID CIRCUIT) to monitor cross border movements of Sandinista forces and rebels in El Salvador.²⁰⁹

The CIA also ran unilateral operations of their own through a covert unit known as the Unilaterally Controlled Latino Assets (UCLAs). The UCLAs, in combination with the Special Forces teams, increasingly began to train, lead, and when specific results were needed, conduct unilateral combat missions, especially sabotage operations. One that would have unforeseen political blowback later was the mining operations in Corinto, Puerto Sandino, and El Bluff

207 Special Operations Division (SOD) was the Pentagon's attempt to stand up a unit specifically designed for "covert operations" It was disbanded after investigations of misappropriation of funds during Operation YELLOW FRUIT. See Alan K. Strait, *The Dilemma Of Covert Action*, (An Individual Study Project, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, U.S. Army War College, 1989), 23.

208 Ibid., 21.

209 Michael Smith, *Killer Elite: Completely Revised and Updated: The Inside Story of America's Most Secret Special Operations Team* St. Martin's Griffin; Second Edition, Revised and Updated edition (New York, NY: St. Martins Griffen, 2011) details ISA operations in Central America. Several sources also have members of 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-DELTA popularly known as *Delta Force* operating with ISA in Honduras and Nicaragua, however while possible, this cannot be verified. See Eric Haney, *Inside Delta Force: The Story of America's Elite Counterterrorist Unit*, (New York, NY: Delta Press 2005).

harbors. In an attempt to target the Nicaraguan economy by attacking shipping, they indirectly deterred and prevented foreign aid from entering the country.²¹⁰

While President Reagan continued to publically support the Contras, opponents of U.S. Nicaraguan activities in the administration feared that any attempt to overthrow the FDLN could lead to a war between Honduras and Nicaragua. This could then, potentially force the U.S. into another Viet Nam scenario, this time in Central America. As a result of these concerns, and with the continued reports of human rights abuses by the Contras, brought to the forefront by the discovery of a CIA-written Contra manual on psychological warfare advocating “dirty tactics,” the second Boland Act passed in 1983. This legislation continued a limited amount of funding, but prohibited any aid earmarked directly for the purpose of overthrowing the Sandinista Government.

In early 1984 the CIA’s role in the mining of the Nicaraguan harbors became public knowledge as a result of exposure in the U.S. media. Congress, felt the operation lacked the notification to Congress as required by law. Public criticism mounted, and after vigorous debate, Congress exercised its constitutional power over appropriations and cut off all funds for the Contras’ military and paramilitary operations. Denied funding by Congress, the National Security Council aide, Lt. Col. Oliver North, turned to third party nations and private sources. This private effort to resource funding was code named

210 Some researchers have speculated the UCLAs were SF/CIA paramilitary officers of Latino decent or third nation Latino assets staged out of the CIA Swan/Tiger Island base in the Gulf of Fonseca where staging for the invasion of Cuba (OP ZAPATA) known as *Bay of Pigs* was conducted. However, much of the information on the UCLAs has not been disclosed to date. Sources have SOD personnel and Task Force 160 air support participation in at least the harbor mining operations; the UCLAs are reported to have conducted at least 19 unilateral combat operations. William M. LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard: The United States In Central America, 1977–1992*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 331, E. Bradford Burns, *At War in Nicaragua: The Reagan Doctrine and the Politics of Nostalgia*, (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1987), 54–56 “Had we come to the economic approach, to warfare, earlier, and gone for the [...] point, I think we could have finished it off, a lot earlier, probably with a lot less lives lost, you know. ...I think we could have reduced the number of casualties, had we just decided the economic was the way to go, a little earlier.” A transcript of CIA Latin America Division chief Duane “Dewey” Clarridge testimony to congress talks about mining the harbors as economic targeting. From, <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/jksonc/docs/U.S.-mining-nicaragua-harbors.html> (accessed on 22 November 2012).

PROJECT DEMOCRACY. Under direction of CIA Director William Casey, Lt. Col. North recruited various, former military and CIA officers with experience in running “flexible” covert operations to help continue the operation.²¹¹

In order to secure the incoming funds, a private company was set up with supporting Swiss bank accounts, airplanes, ships, real estate and sub-companies. “The Enterprise,” was more than a cover company, it was an unofficial, off the books, private organization designed to engage in covert activities. The Enterprise served as the secret arm of the NSC staff. They ran an unconventional warfare campaign by using private and non-appropriated funds, and incorrectly thought free of accountability or restrictions imposed by the laws written by Congress. Congress was ironically actively passing laws to limit those exact activities.²¹²

Ultimately, it was the funding that led to the exposure of the unsanctioned operation, which led to the end of the Enterprise. Initially funding came in from private donors, those who supported the Regan Doctrine and who wanted to support the stand against communism. Third party nations, including Israel, Taiwan, Brunei and Saudi Arabia, who were all traditional U.S. allies, followed suit. Later a plan was concocted to include “moderate” members of the Iranian government who, through Israeli contacts, would pay large amounts of money for U.S. weapons. The weapons that were sold included TOW anti-tank and HAWK

211 A former OSS officer and President Reagan’s campaign manager, Casey oversaw the re-expansion of the Intelligence Community to funding and human resource levels greater than those existing before the preceding Carter Administration; in particular, he increased levels within the CIA. During his tenure, restrictions were lifted on the use of the CIA to directly and covertly influence the internal and foreign affairs of countries relevant to American policy. See: Joseph E. Persico, *The Lives and Secrets of William J. Casey: From the OSS to the CIA*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1991) Many of the key players were also involved in OP ZAPATA (Bay of Pigs Invasion), OP MONGOOSE (Plan to topple Castro government), and OP ICEX /PHOENIX (Viet Nam counter VC infrastructure); see also Bob Woodward, *Veil: Secret Wars of the CIA 1981–1987*, (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1987).

212 Enterprise consisted of retired or on leave military and intelligence personnel, businessmen, professional criminals and right-wing millionaire financiers and operated without the sanction or knowledge of Congress. It formed an integral part of the Reagan administrations continued activity in Nicaragua after 1984 and was headed by the National Security Council.

missile systems.²¹³ The plan deteriorated into an arms-for-hostages scheme, with the Enterprise acting under direct supervision of the NSC. Through Lt. Col. North, the Enterprise sold weapons to Iran in exchange for the release of the seven American hostages held by Hezbollah. The plan changed several times over the course of several years. As funds were diverted to support the Contras, a large percent went into private accounts. This made Enterprise, and some of those associated with it, a handsome profit. In the end, after thousands of missiles were given to Iran, the hostages were still not freed.

The operation was exposed when former-Marine, CIA contractor, Eugene Hasenfus, was captured while delivering supplies to the Contras. His SAT C-123 cargo plane was shot down over Nicaragua on October 5, 1986. After their plane came under fire, Hasenfus parachuted to safety, but was subsequently captured by FSLN authorities. The rest of the crew, two pilots and a radio operator, died in the crash. Hasenfus confessed that the plane was an unmarked, CIA aircraft resupplying the Contras. Documents found in the crash confirmed his story and implicated known CIA officers that were still directly supporting the Contras. The blowback in the media and Congress led to investigations and public trails. Both the NSC and CIA were implicated.

In the end, the U.S. withdrew its support to the Contras due to the outcry of human rights violations. The question of the NSC securing outside funding and effectively bypassing Congress, along with the arms deals brokered with Iran, left a feeling of betrayal with Congress and the public. Unfortunately, the negative connotation that resulted from the public Iran-Contra trials over shadowed any good results of the operation. It is difficult to find material with an objective view of the mission, even decades later.

213 The TOW (Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire command-link guided) missile system and the HAWK is an all-weather, surface-to-air, medium-range/medium-altitude missile system.

3. Analysis

The following sections of this chapter will highlight significant factors that were implicitly or explicitly influential in the decision to embark on unconventional warfare operations in Nicaragua. The decision to conduct UW is in contrast to the other two general options: no military action, or conventional military action. Just as the other case studies, these factors are categorized into Internal Enablers, Internal Constraints, External Enablers, and External Constraints.²¹⁴

a. Decision Point

In the case of Nicaragua, the two periods that bracket the decision point are in January 1981, and December 1981. The first event, before the decision, was in January of 1981 as the inauguration of President Reagan took place, an internal shaping event that echoed throughout the world. Another shaping event prior to the decision point was an external matter, when the U.S. identified FSLN support to neighboring Communist revolutionaries in El Salvador in late 1980, feeding into a narrative that communists were destabilizing the region. These events were the crossroads that necessitated action. The events on the post-decision timeline were the Presidential Finding, signed by Reagan in December of 1981, indicating internal actions were now authorized to intervene in Nicaragua, and the operations in March 1982 in which the Contras destroyed two bridges to interdict FSLN resupply. These two events are indicative of an increase in resources allocated and in output from the movement. All four events surround the decision point that happened between January and December of

²¹⁴ Enablers are arguments for action; these either oppose no military action, or support UW over conventional military action. Constraints are arguments for no action, or they argue for the use of conventional military action over UW. The internal domain is that which is contained in the domestic U.S. arena. This is a function of popular opinion or support (important due to the U.S. status as a democracy), capability, capacity, or leadership. The external domain is that outside of the U.S.. This includes the “targeted country’s” internal activities and circumstance, world events and reaction, and, perhaps the most heavily weighted, peer competitors’ actions, capacity, and capability.

1981. Of note, an additional event that had shaping effects on the UW campaign in Nicaragua was the Argentinian invasion of the Falkland Islands (see Figure 10).

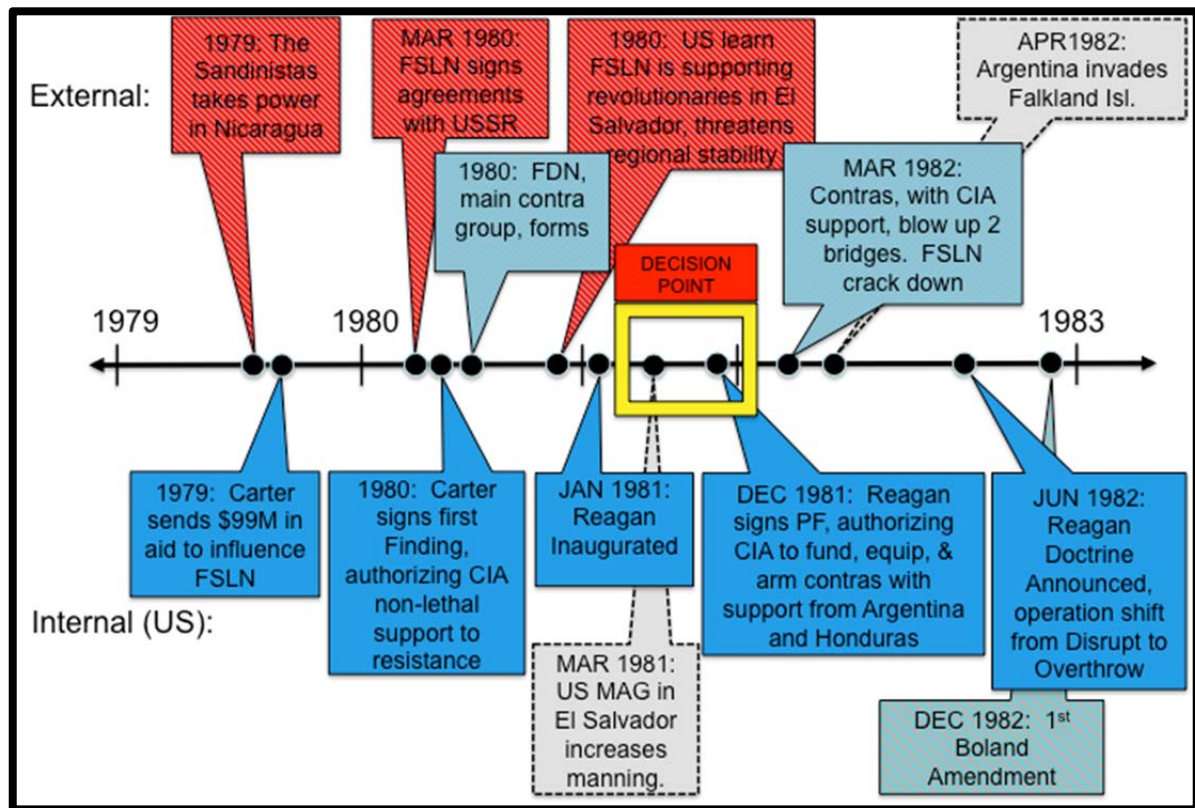


Figure 10. Decision Point Timeline for Nicaragua

b. Internal Enablers

The Operation Had A Marketable Narrative. Ronald Reagan's efforts to challenge the legitimacy of the Soviet Union spanned the globe, but the insurgent Contras' cause in Nicaragua was particularly dear to him. Battling the Cuban-backed Sandinistas, the Contras were, according to Reagan, "the moral equivalent of our Founding Fathers."²¹⁵ Under the *Reagan Doctrine*, fighting

²¹⁵ PBS website, "General Article: The Iran-Contra Affair."
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americalexperience/features/general-article/reagan-iran/>, (accessed 23 November 2012).

communism was the only way to “roll back” the advances the USSR made since the beginning of the Cold War. In the case of Nicaragua and the story put out by the media, it seemed as though it was a calling that had to be answered by the American people, sponsoring the Contras was as American as baseball.

UW Experienced Individuals Influential to the Decision Maker.

Personalities with a Penchant for Covert Actions were surrounding the President. Former OSS alumni William J. Casey ran the CIA for the Reagan administration between 1981 and 1987. Casey was Reagan’s campaign manager during his election and had the Presidents trust as part of his inner circle. Casey had directed OSS operations to drop agents into occupied France and was seen by Reagan as one of the true heroes who could defeat evil. The Vice President under President Reagan was another CIA alumni and future President George H.W. Bush. This period was more active for covert operations than any time since the Eisenhower years. It was reported in 1984 that fifty major covert operations were in progress at that time as compared to ten during the final year of the Carter administration.²¹⁶ This continues to demonstrate the case where the men surrounding the President were influential to the increased use of unconventional warfare and the activity in covert operations.

Army SOCOM, Revitalizing Capability. Operation Eagle Claw,²¹⁷ the aborted mission that resulted from failures at the covert landing site codenamed Desert One, led to casualties, embarrassment, and the continued captivity of American hostages.²¹⁸ The consolidation of Army special operations capability, under a newly formed organization within the Army and housed in Fort Bragg, NC, brought a new priority to management of capability, and resulted in

216 Covert Operations, Retrieved from: <http://www.americanforeignrelations.com/A-D/Covert-Operations-Evolution-of-covert-operations.html#b#ixzz2B53gL9No>, (accessed on 22 October 2012).

217 Operation Rice Bowl and Eagle Claw are interchangeable; Rice Bowl was the Air Force portion of the mission. Susan Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces*. (Washington D.C.: Brookings, 1997).

218 Susan Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces*. (Washington D.C.: Brookings, 1997), 1–3.

the Army increasing manning and funding to the Special Forces Groups. 1st Special Operations Command (1st SOCOM) was stood up within the Army and became home to Rangers, Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations. These efforts occurred simultaneously to discussion and concern over American special operations capability, specifically in counter-terrorism, hostage rescue, and low intensity conflict.²¹⁹ This new focus would drive increases in resources from within the services, but also capture interest of decision makers, namely to provide the U.S. with a capability that Operation Eagle Claw underscored was lacking. Soon, this work would have to be operationally tested. There was no public support for a conventional war by the public or the Department of Defense –both still suffered from the Vietnam Syndrome.

Covert Nature of UW Allowed Circumnavigation of Accountability and Oversight. National Security Advisor (NSA) Robert McFarlane, in his May 11, 1987, testimony at the Iran-contra hearings, stated that the president and his advisers “turned to covert action (in Nicaragua) because they thought they could not get Congressional support for overt activities.”²²⁰

Conditions Did Not Predicate An Immediate Conventional Warfare Response. Given the superior conventional military capabilities of the U.S. compared to the Sandinistas, the Reagan Administration could have easily invaded Nicaragua and overthrown the Sandinista regime. This capacity would be shown to the world in the 1984 invasion of Grenada, showcasing U.S. conventional warfare with success. However, Congress would have blocked military operations in Nicaragua.²²¹ As the Legislative branch would have to

219 Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare*, 73–75.

220 Alan K. Strait, *The Dilemma Of Covert Action*, (An Individual Study Project, Pennsylvania, PA: U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks, 1989), 17.

221 Alan K. Strait, *The Dilemma Of Covert Action*, (An Individual Study Project, Pennsylvania, PA: U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks, 1989), 17.

approve conventional military options, per the 1973 War Powers Act, and could ultimately block the sustained conventional military campaign, decision makers never pursued this course of action. Despite the overwhelming military dominance over the Sandinistas, this was overcome by Congress' ability to block the use of conventional forces, leaving only one remaining option for action, UW.

c. External Enablers

Falkland Island War. When the U.S. backed its long-standing, and closest ally, publicly supporting the UK during their defense of the Falkland Islands from Argentinian aggression, Argentina ceased their support as a third country enabler in Nicaragua. This, in turn, led to increased requirements for self-sustaining activity on behalf of the U.S. in Nicaragua. The added autonomy and hands-on management resulted in more unilateral action, and a robust air-support capability. Although this variable was not an argument during a decision, it does support the "ramp up" concept. This event shaped the type and level of support ongoing in Nicaragua, as opposed to causing a fork in the road, or decision.

The Operation Supported a Marketable Narrative. When the USSR invaded Afghanistan in December of 1979, the U.S. responded with a UW campaign that supported the *organic-resistance* movement to counter Soviet occupation. The situation was complex; the covert UW campaign began in lieu of any conventional military option in fear of further Soviet escalation.²²² U.S. policy of containment quickly returned to popularity when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. President Carter's underscoring of human rights was the beacon of his foreign policy but was quickly supplemented after Soviet aggression. Direct support to Afghan mujahedeen and the Pakistanis would again facilitate U.S. policy to contain the USSR and prevent further spread of Communism. To make

²²² The Carter Doctrine "committed America to war in the event of any threat to the strategic oil fields of the Middle East," however; the Soviets likely had a similar response in mind if U.S. escalation was detected. (*Charlie Wilson's War*. p.15) This led to the necessity of covert operations, namely with non-attributable equipment being funneled into the Afghan resistance to ensure U.S. sponsorship was undetected.

matters worse, and bring the problem to the U.S.' backyard, it was "discovered" that a Soviet Combat Brigade was in Cuba (although it was later revealed they had been there since the Cuban Missile Crisis).²²³

In El Salvador a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla movement was underway and had gained the attention of the Reagan Administration. Author Tommie Sue Montgomery writes in *Revolution in El Salvador*, "in late February 1981 the Department of State issued a document that claimed to offer "definitive evidence of the clandestine military support given ...by the Soviet Union, Cuba, and their Communist allies [(FSLN)] to ...guerillas now fighting to overthrow the established government of El Salvador."²²⁴ This was enough to justify increased military support to the government of El Salvador; Military Advisory Groups included 56 advisors and instructors by the end of March 1981. Since the FSLN had taken power in Nicaragua, similar fears of a communist invasion necessitated prevention. At a minimum, U.S. intervention was needed to help counter the destabilization that was setting off in the region. President Reagan did just that; he took immediate actions in Nicaragua after his inauguration by cutting aid and initiating the covert action by signing a Presidential Finding.²²⁵

d. Internal Constraints.

Congressional Blocking. Congress was fearful that increased U.S. support in Nicaragua would start an all-out war between the numerous Latin American states involved (El Salvador, Honduras, Cuba, and Argentina). As evidence by the Boland Amendments, Congress was determined to limit any U.S. intervention or activity in the region, specifically Nicaragua.

223 John Gaddis. *The Cold War: A New History*. (New York, NY : Penguin, 2005), 203.

224 Tommie Sue Montgomery, *Revolution in El Salvador: from civil strife to civil peace – 2nd ed.* Westview Press, CO. 1995. p. 150–151 referencing the "white paper" titled "Communist Interference in El Salvador," issued by the Department of State.

225 Reagan, *Secret Presidential Finding*, Dated 1 December 1981.

Vietnam, Still Recent in the Minds of America. The U.S. chalked up its first real “loss” in the 20th century in Vietnam. The fact that U.S. blood, treasure, and credibility that was invested into South Vietnam’s sustained existence was seemingly lost when the struggling democracy fell in 1975 during the last fight for Saigon, leaving a significant impact on the American People. Additionally, the cost of twenty years of war was seen throughout society, scores of wounded soldiers struggled to reintegrate themselves at home. The unpopular war was an episode in American history no one wanted to repeat.

It was likely that in the early 1980s the American public and Congress would not support conventional military action. An open military effort by the U.S. in Nicaragua would likely have been too costly in terms of human lives and financial resources and American public would not have tolerated such loss, particularly after the failure of Vietnam.

Hostages in Iran, Bittersweet. America brought the hostages home, shortly after a *tough against communism* President was inaugurated in 1981. However, the recent embarrassments of failure, continuing from the jungles of Vietnam to the deserts of Iran²²⁶, still need to be addressed. Marquis states that the failures in Operation Rice Bowl were “clear evidence of the inadequacy of U.S. special operations capabilities...that began the turnaround in for SOF.”²²⁷ Not only did the Military need specific changes forced upon them to address the emerging threat global terrorism brought, but also the failure to develop a capability on their own left the DoD’s reputation tarnished. Although this may not have had a direct impact on the decision making process for Nicaragua, it did add to recent perceived failures by the Department of Defense, making UW more desirable due to its covert nature.

226 Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare*. P. 1–3

227 Ibid., 69.

e. External Constraints

Regional Escalation. U.S. intervention had the potential to disturb the balance of power, but more importantly provide the means and justification to ignite the powder keg of potential conflict in Central and South America. Unconventional or conventional means could have potentially similar second order effects, despite any short-term gains in Nicaragua.

Bad Press. World opinion would have lasting effects on U.S. alliances, treaties, and the international opinion that was so necessary during the final stages of the Cold War. The U.S. actions in Central and South America, regarding intervention and supporting internal instability within sovereign nations had a lasting effect on U.S. public relations image. In a war against ideology, essentially one of the lines of operation in which the Cold War held, defining the image of the U.S. as a country that supported legitimate conflict resolution was pertinent to spreading pro-U.S. sentiment. Getting involved in Nicaragua, especially in supporting a rebel faction opposing the government, would do the opposite and potentially further tarnish American reputation.

4. Summary

Nicaragua, a form of *Organic-Revolution*, saw all variables that constrained the approval to wage unconventional warfare against the Sandinista Government overcome. Internally, the enablers of Reagan's "roll back" ideology that was captured in his policy, the continued existence of OSS legacy encircling decision makers, the revitalization of military capacity in special operations, and the methodology of UW providing the only means to bypass Congress' public objections proved enough to overcome restraint. Additionally, the external events of the Falkland Island War and how it affected operations in Nicaragua, as well as the aim to prevent a Soviet foothold in Central America further aided the decision to wage UW. The constraints laid forth by Congress, the diminished (although rapidly increasing) military capability and capacity, the recent loss in South Vietnam, and the black eye that resulted from the failure to militarily free

the hostages in Iran, coupled with external variables of potential bad press and regional escalation, all proved inadequate in deterring decision makers from using UW to achieve policy.

Nicaragua was a milestone in U.S. history. The blowback of the Iran-Contra investigations would have significant impact on decision makers during their debates on how the U.S. would wage war during the next crisis, covered in the next chapter: Panama and Operation Just Cause.

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E. CASE V: PANAMA, 1988–1990²²⁸

1. Introduction

The overthrow of Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega's regime by U.S. military forces provides the negative, or *non-UW* case to this study. This case represents the decision to use conventional, albeit *limited* warfare,²²⁹ in an operation focused on the direct removal of Noriega's regime and the defeat of the Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF). The importance of this non-case is that it offers a basis for comparison in identifying which variables were present, missing, or less dominant than in the cases of UW. While the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989 is a textbook case of conventional warfare, the events leading to the decision point and the environment indicate that UW was a possible option. The *movement* in Panama, had it been utilized for UW would have been classified into the *Organic-Revolutionary* quadrant of the UW typology.²³⁰ Because the invasion force was an external power, therefore *synthetic*; it would be difficult to define an invasion from another nation as *revolution* in the context used to describe unconventional warfare.

2. Background

The history of Panama has always been influenced by its strategic location. The narrowest land isthmus in Central America, Panama is bordered by Costa Rica to the Northwest and Columbia to the Southeast. U.S. interest to link the Atlantic and Pacific oceans by means of a canal in Central America had existed for many years. Having built the canal under President Roosevelt, the

228 The date of Operation JUST CAUSE was 20 December 1989 thru mid January 1990 however there were activities leading up to the invasion in 1988.

229 While there were numerous SOF units involved in the operation by the terms defined in this paper the operation was still "conventional." The term *limited war* is used to identify a conflict in which the belligerents participating in the war do not expend all of each of the participants' available resources at their disposal, whether human, industrial, agricultural, military, natural, technological, or otherwise in a specific conflict. Limited war is an opposite of the concept of total war. Christopher M. Gacek, *The Logic of Force: The Dilemma of Limited War in American Foreign Policy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 9.

230 See Chapter II.

U.S. opened 14 military bases to protect its interest and took complete control of the Canal Zone.²³¹ The period of U.S. enforced peace lasted until the early 1960s. Clashes between Panamanians and U.S. students coupled with demands for an end to U.S. “occupation” led President Johnson to draft a new Canal treaty in 1967. Before the new treaty was signed, Colonel Boris Martinez, the head of a military junta, overthrew Panama’s President Arnulfo Arinas. Lieutenant Colonel Omar Torrijos Herrera, who maintained power through fear and violence, soon replaced Martinez. Torrijos’ efforts were made possible with the assistance of his U.S. trained head of military intelligence, Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Noriega.²³²

On 7 September 1977, General Torrijos and U.S. President Jimmy Carter signed the Torrijos-Carter Treaties, which outlined the complete transfer of the Canal and the fourteen U.S. Army bases from the U.S. to Panamanian control by 1999.²³³ During the 1980s, stopping the Communist encroachment in Latin America dominated the regional focus of the U.S.. Panama provided bases and facilities that provided a base for U.S. activities in the region. Panama also provided the U.S. with a safe haven to facilitate training and support for the U.S. sponsored guerrilla force, the *Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense*, known in the U.S. as the Contras.²³⁴ Manuel Noriega was considered an essential asset in

231 The Panama Canal Zone was a 553-square-mile U.S. territory located within the Republic of Panama, consisting of the Panama Canal and an area generally extending five miles on each side of the centerline. See Robert C Harding II, *The History of Panama*, (West Port, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), 4.

232 Noriega received intelligence and counterintelligence training at the later famous *School of the Americas* at the U.S. Army base Fort Gulick in 1967, as well as a course in psychological operations (Psyops) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. From Lawrence A. Yates, *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama Origins, Planning, and Crisis Management June 1987–December 1989*, (Contingency Operations Series, 2008), 10.

233 For texts of the two treaties, see Sandra W. Meditz, Dennis Hanrath, Dennis Michael Hanratty *Panama: A Country Study: Area Handbook Series*, Library of Congress Federal Research Division, (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1989), 273–93.

234 See also Chapter 6 and William M. LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard: The United States In Central America, 1977–1992*, (The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), Chamorro, Edgar. “Running the Nicaraguan War: An Inside View of CIA as Master of the Contras.” *First Principles* 11, 1 (1985), Stephen Kinzer, *Blood of Brothers: Life and War in Nicaragua*, David Rockefeller Center Series on Latin American Studies, and Sam Dillon, *Commandos: The CIA and Nicaragua’s Contra Rebels* (New York, NY: Henry Holt & Co, 1992).

securing those interests. He leveraged his role as head of military intelligence to become a key partner for various U.S. interests and agencies operating in the region.

On 31 July 1981, General Torrijos was killed in an unexplained plane crash in western Panama.²³⁵ In the political turmoil that followed, one condition remained constant: the National Guard continued to dominate Panamanian politics. In the following two-year brutal contest for power between politicians and military officers, Noriega emerged as the winner. In late 1983, following his promotion to general and commander of the National Guard, the guard was combined with the police, navy, and air force to create the Panama Defense Forces (PDF). The following year Noriega's choice for president, Nicolás Ardito Barletta, won a narrow victory over the former President Arnulfo Arias. Barletta's presidency did not last long. Once he initiated an investigation into Noriega's involvement in the murder of a popular leader, he was removed from office. After assigning himself as the commander of the newly formed PDF in 1983, Noriega entrenched himself as the dominant power in Panama and gave no sign of willingness to return the government to civilian control. Noriega's violent rise to power did not go unnoticed in the U.S.; but his support to U.S. covert operations rose as well.

Under Noriega's rule, the U.S. was allowed to set up clandestine listening posts in Panama, which monitored sensitive communications in all of Central America. In addition, Noriega continued to aid the U.S. efforts of support against the rebels in El Salvador and the unconventional warfare campaign against the government of Nicaragua. He used Panama's flexible offshore banking laws to launder money and facilitate the flow of arms to the Contras, who the U.S.

²³⁵ While there were numerous allegations that Noriega himself was behind Torrijos death, no research in this study validated those claims.

brought to Panama to train. He also allowed unmarked, signals-intelligence aircraft from the CIA and DoD to stage from airfields in country and fly missions throughout the region.²³⁶

The U.S. support to Noriega, public or private, began to decline after his implication in the Iran-Contra investigations brought a public awareness and closer scrutiny of his activities and drug connection. Lt. Col. North had used Panama's off shore banking and Noriega's assistance in setting up training camps for the Contras. A Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee investigation report found numerous e-mails and notes from meetings between Lt. Col. North and Noriega, coordinating for sabotage of major economic targets in the capital of Nicaragua, including an airport, an oil refinery, electric and telephone systems.²³⁷ In June 1987 Noriega's former chief of staff, Colonel Roberto Diaz Herrera, stated that Noriega had fixed the 1984 election and ordered the killing of an opposition leader who had publicly accused Noriega of drug trafficking. Herrera also said Noriega had been involved in planting a bomb on his former mentor, General Torrijos's airplane. Panamanians organized protests demanding the removal of Noriega. He responded by declaring a national emergency. He suspended constitutional rights, closed newspapers and radio stations, and drove his political enemies into exile. In response to the negative media and the image of a U.S. backed dictator, the U.S. Senate called for Noriega's removal. On 28 February 1988, SouthCom received orders from the JCS directing them to

236 While the *Newsweek* article only says "Noriega allowed U.S. Spy planes to be based in Panama." It likely refers to ISA Operation QUEENS HUNTER or SOD/CIA Operation SEA SPRAY see Chapter 6 on Nicaragua or Michael Smith, *Killer Elite: Completely Revised and Updated: The Inside Story of America's Most Secret Special Operations Team* St. Martin's Griffin; Second Edition, Revised and Updated edition (New York, NY: St. Martins Griffen, 2011) Noriega's connection from Fredrick Kempe, *Divorcing the Dictator: America's Bungled Affair with Noriega*, Putnam Adult; First Printing edition (New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's sons, 1990) also "The Noriega Files" *Newsweek* (15 January 1990).

237 The text of the Kerry subcommittee report pages 145–146 directly quote 15 pages of Oliver North's notebook entries related to drug trafficking. Entries excerpts from documents number 12,10,7 From "The Oliver North File: His Diaries, E-Mail, and Memos" *Kerry Report, Contras and Drugs*, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 113 (February 26, 2004) Online at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB113/index.htm#northnotes>, (accessed on 12 November 2012).

begin formal planning in a “crisis action mode” for possible military operations against the Panama Defense Forces. As a result the first plan titled CINCSO OPORD 2–88, code-named ELABORATE MAZE was ready on 4 March for transmission to the Joint Chiefs. On 11 March, the Joint Chiefs weighed in, formally approving continued development of the operation order.²³⁸

On 16 March 1988, Panamanian Chief of Police, Colonel Leonidas Macias, organized a coup against Noriega. While it was suspected the coup failed due to loyal Noriega informants, it indicated that there were elements, even within his command, that were willing to try to get rid of their commander on their own. The notion was if there was an attempted coup, covert action and unconventional warfare might still be an option. This was explored further in August of 1988 when President Reagan signed a finding authorizing covert action against Noriega. The finding, in summary, provided funding for the power transmitter of a radio station and authority for the CIA to coordinate activities with Noriega’s former Chief of Staff, Roberto Herrera, now exiled from Panama and living in the U.S.²³⁹ One plan, discussed but not executed, was to send Herrera and other Panamanian exiles back into Panama and let them operate from safe houses on U.S. military bases. Once there, they would conduct sabotage operations, raid Noriega’s bases, and carry out propaganda operations. If Noriega discovered the rebels and attacked, it would also give further justification for a more direct military response, as any attack on a U.S. base would warrant.²⁴⁰ Unfortunately the CIA, post Iran-Contra, was limited by both policy

238 The plan being labeled an operation order (OPORD) instead of an operation plan (OPLAN) speaks to the understanding from the planners that this was a mission that was going to be executed. Lawrence A. Yates, *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama Origins, Planning, and Crisis Management June 1987–December 1989*, Contingency Operations Series, (Washington D.C.: Center for Military History, 2008), 38.

239 William Scott Malone, “The Panama Debacle -Uncle Sam Wimps Out” *Washington Post*, (April 23rd 1989) From: <http://wscottmalone.blogspot.com/2012/05/w-scott-malone-panama-debacle-uncle-sam.html> (accessed on 14 November 2012).

240 While this plan had some support from the CIA, the SouthCom commander refused based on his belief it would violate the Canal Treaties. Several other plans were developed and rejected by the administration as too risky or not politically acceptable.

makers and public support.²⁴¹ In the end it was agreed to wait until after the election to attempt any action, covert or otherwise. The situation continued to deteriorate, by the end of 1988 there were over 300 incidences of U.S. military personnel and family members' that were harassed, threatened, or assaulted by the PDF.²⁴²

Although the planning started for a conventional invasion, no further action was taken for the remainder of President Reagan's final term in office. George H.W. Bush was inaugurated as the 41st president on 20 January 1989. U.S.-Panamanian relations were at an all-time low, marked with numerous incidents against U.S. service members. In May 1989 the U.S. sent officials to observe the elections in Panama to ensure they were run fairly. In an attempt to influence the political system, President Bush authorized the CIA to provide \$10 million dollars to the opposition party. When Noriega realized that his candidate was losing, he ordered the PDF to seize ballot boxes and cancelled the election. The people took to the streets in protest and Noriega's squads crushed them, killing dozens and injuring hundreds.²⁴³ In response the U.S. suspended military aid to Panama and the DoD reduced military contacts between SouthCom and the PDF. As violence grew in the streets of Panama tensions also grew in Washington.

One final window of opportunity to use UW came and went, on 1 October 1989; a day referred to as *Black Tuesday*.²⁴⁴ Surprising both the SouthCom and

241 Three veteran covert operations planners Armacost, Stoltz and Armitage were brought in to plan the operation. Reportedly they were so hamstrung by Congress that they left disappointed but "not surprised" that Congress did not support the Presidents covert finding. Frederick Kempe, *Divorcing the Dictator: America's Bungled Affair with Noriega* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1990), 342.

242 U.S. Army Chief of Military History, *Operation JUST CAUSE: The Incursion into Panama* (2012), 8.

243 Different sources claim numbers of injured and killed up to several hundred.

244 For details about the coup, see Scranton, *The Noriega Years*, 185–192; Buckley, *Panama: The Whole Story*, 197–218; Kempe, *Divorcing the Dictator*, 369–397. The name *Black Tuesday* is from Lawrence A. Yates, *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama Origins, Planning, and Crisis Management June 1987–December 1989*, Contingency Operations Series (2008), 242–262.

the CIA, the wife of a PDF Major with access to Noriega's inner circle, walked into SouthCom headquarters and announced that her husband was planning to execute a coup against Noriega the following day. Although her husband did not want direct U.S. military involvement, he asked that U.S. forces block the roads leading into Panama City so that PDF units loyal to Noriega could not come to his aid and stop the coup. U.S. reacted to the plan with skepticism. The decision was made to not support the coup, but instead, to have the blocking positions standing by in case they were needed. After a days delay waiting for Noriega to arrive at the headquarters, Major Giroldi executed the coup with his group of loyal officers and captured the General. While in discussion with SouthCom, letting them know his mission was accomplished, three companies loyal to Noriega flew past the U.S. blocking positions that were standing by and assaulted the rebel group at the headquarters. All the officers involved in the coup were captured, tortured, and killed.²⁴⁵

The failure of the U.S. to support the coup drew criticism from Congressional leaders of both parties, reporters, commentators, and anonymous White House officials. Senator Jesse Helms called the administration "a bunch of Keystone Kops" and bitterly predicted that, "After this, no member of the PDF can be expected to act against Noriega."²⁴⁶ U.S. reaction towards the attempted coup was chaotic and inconsistent. One of the possible reasons for the confusion was a near simultaneous change in two top military positions. On 30 September 1989, three days before the coup, General Maxwell Thurman replaced General Woerner as SouthCom commander and one day later, General Colin Powell replaced Admiral Crowe as the chairman of the JCS. General Thurman was especially vocal against the coup. He thought it was a plot to test him as the new

245 David Pitt, *The New York Times* "Widow of Panama Coup Leader Says Fellow Plotter Betrayed Him." Published 12 October 1989. website: <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/10/12/world/widow-of-panama-coup-leader-says-fellow-plotter-betrayed-him.html>, (accessed 16 November 2012).

246 David Hoffman and Ann Devroy, "U.S. Was Caught off Guard by Coup Attempt" and Molly Moore and Joe Pichirallo, "Cheney," *Washington Post*, (Washington, DC), 6 October 1989.

commander.²⁴⁷ A very conventional minded officer, General Thurman came up through the ranks in the ordnance branch then was assigned to recruiting command. Called “Mad Max” by his men due to his rigidity, Thurman was brought out of retirement by Powell because of his strict military discipline. General Woerner, it was determined, was too soft on the Panamanians by looking for a non-violent way to end the growing trouble.²⁴⁸ In Thurman’s opinion, a coup was too simple with too many details left out.²⁴⁹ Thurman voiced his concerns to Powell, who reportedly responded that, “getting rid of Noriega was something that had to be done on a U.S. timetable.” Powell said he did not like the idea of a “half-baked coup with a half-baked coup leader.”²⁵⁰ The President was not so sure the coup should have been ignored, after being attacked by all sides in Washington for the military’s failure to respond to the coup, it resulted in a missed opportunity to remove Noriega. Bush reportedly chastised his advisors angrily saying, “Amateur hour is over” and “Enough is enough.”²⁵¹

On December 15, in response to the coup and the perceived U.S. acts against their country, the Panamanian General Assembly passed a resolution declaring that the actions of the U.S. had caused a state of war to exist between Panama and the U.S. In the late evening hours of 16 December, following the war declaration, four off-duty U.S. military officers were driving through Panama City when they were stopped at a roadblock. Pointing their rifles toward the car, the PDF demanded that the Americans get out of their vehicle. Not wanting to be

247 Bob Woodward, *The Commanders*, 120. Also Buckley, *Panama: The Whole Story*, 199.

248 The lack of timely decisions caused Woerner to make some candid comments that, to his dismay, got him off on the wrong foot with the new administration, and led to his replacement. He also proposed a series of interagency plans for covert U.S. psychological operations that would improve the flow of information from “non-regime sources” in Panama to the Panamanian people. Because of “legal limitations on covert activities by DoD and our need not to be seen as being directly tied to the opposition,” Woerner recommended that the military serve in “a supporting and advisory role to the agency as the lead. On Woerner’s status in Washington, see Donnelly, Roth, and Baker, *Operation Just Cause*, pp. 16, 26–27; Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 83; Cole, *Operation Just Cause*, 10.

249 Thomas Donnelly, Margaret Roth, Caleb Baker, *Operation Just Cause: The Storming of Panama*, (New York: Lexington Books, December 1991), 67.

250 Woodward, *Commanders*, 121.

251 Woodward, *Commanders*, 128, see also Kempe, *Divorcing the Dictator*, 8.

separated from their vehicle and mobbed by the crowd, the officers attempted to drive away. The guards fired at the car, killing the driver a U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant.²⁵²

Based on the incident, General Thurman requested to execute the military plan that had been revised over the last year. On 17 December 1989, General Powell briefed the Joint Chiefs and secured their agreement that this incident met the conditions to execute the military plan to intervene, depending on approval from President Bush.²⁵³ In the final meeting, which reportedly lasted less than 30 minutes, President Bush asked if there were other options. Powell pushed the “Sledgehammer” approach on the President saying, “This was the only way to guarantee success rapidly, which an impatient American public would demand.”²⁵⁴ The President agreed and ordered OP Plan 90–2, called Operation BLUE SPOON, to execute as planned.²⁵⁵ As thousands of troops from all over the U.S. began to mobilize for the mission, last minute details were ironed out and Operation BLUE SPOON was renamed to Operation JUST CAUSE.²⁵⁶

252 *The New York Times*, “Excerpts From U.S. Account of Officer’s Death in Panama.” Published 18 December 1989. <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/12/18/world/excerpts-from-us-account-of-officer-s-death-in-panama.html>, (accessed 16 November 2012).

253 Michael R. Gordon, *The New York Times* “Fighting in Panama: The Chief of Staff; Vital for the Invasion: Politically Attuned General.” Published 25 December 1989. website: <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/12/25/world/fighting-panama-chief-staff-vital-for-invasion-politically-attuned-general.html>, (accessed 16 November 2012).

254 Bob Woodward, *The Commanders*, and Fredrick Kempe, *Divorcing the Dictator*, 12.

255 U.S. Army Chief of Military History, *Operation JUST CAUSE: The Incursion into Panama* (2012), 18.

256 Reportedly Gen. Powell suggested the name change because “no one would want to die for a Blue Spoon” See Cramer, J. K. ““Just Cause” or Just Politics? *U.S. Panama Invasion and Standardizing Qualitative Tests for Diversionary War*, *Armed Forces & Society* 32.2 (2006), 178–201.

Joint Task Force South commanded all branches of the military involved in the operation.²⁵⁷ While there were far more conventional forces in the operation than the special operations component, the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) spearheaded the operation.²⁵⁸ The JSOTF, commanded by Major General Wayne A. Downing, was organized into smaller task forces: Task Force GREEN (Army Special Mission Unit, Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta), Task Force RED (the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment), Task Force BLACK (Army Special Forces), and Task Force WHITE (SEALs and Special Boat Units). Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs units, Army Special Operations helicopters, and USAF Combat Control Teams supported these task force elements. The JSOTF's principal H-Hour²⁵⁹ missions were the capture of Noriega and the destruction of the PDF's ability to fight. Due to the lack of intelligence, the U.S. forces did not know Noriega's location at H-Hour; accordingly, the JSOTF focused on the H-Hour missions against the PDF, the attack on the *La Comandancia* and the rescue of a U.S. citizen, Kurt Muse, held hostage in the

257 Ground forces would have of combat elements of the XVIII Airborne Corps, the 82nd Airborne Division, the 7th Infantry Division (Light), elements of the 5th Infantry Division, 1st Battalion, 61st U.S. Infantry, 4th Battalion, 6th United States Infantry, 1138th Military Police Company of the Missouri Army National Guard, 193rd Infantry Brigade, 508th Infantry Regiment, the 59th Engineer Co. (Sappers), Marine Security Forces Battalion Panama, and elements from the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, Marine Fleet Antiterrorism Security Teams, 2nd Armored Infantry Battalion, and 2nd Marine Logistics Group 39th Combat Engineer Battalion Charlie Company.

258 Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-05: Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*, 17 April 1998. PDF from: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB63/doc3.pdf>, (accessed 16 November 2012), 16.

259 The term H-hour is used for the hour on which a military operation is to be initiated.

adjoining prison known as the *Carcel Modelo*.²⁶⁰ TF GREEN would execute this mission, dubbed OP ACID GAMBIT.²⁶¹

Across Task Force South the fighting continued for four days. U.S. troop losses were in the hundreds; the Panamanians lost thousands. Noriega escaped capture for a few days but was found hiding in the Papal Nunciature, a religious office of the Catholic Church. Under pressure from Vatican officials and an intense Psyops barrage of rock music, Noriega surrendered to the Vatican Embassy in Panama City on January 3, 1990. The Vatican and U.S. worked out an agreement; Noriega was handed over to U.S. authorities and brought to Miami for trial. In the end he was sentenced to forty years in a Miami prison and ordered to pay \$44 million to the Panamanian government.²⁶²

While Operation JUST CAUSE may have demonstrated just how far Special Operations Forces had come in a conventional warfare campaign since the failure of Operation EAGLE CLAW.²⁶³ It was also a case where

²⁶⁰ Some accounts (Woodward, *The Commanders*) claim Muse was a CIA officer however that has never been officially confirmed. What accounts agree on is he was arrested by the PDF while setting up mobile radio station transmitters in Panama City that were broadcasting Anti-Noriega propaganda. Muse later claimed he was a businessman who had a hobby in radio transmission and wanted to harass Noriega because he was against his politics. The fact that his actions coincide with the Presidential finding for covert action allowing for radio station and propaganda transmissions may well be a coincidence. See Molly Moore, "U.S. Sought Premise for Using Military in Panama; Months Before 1989 Invasion, Bush Was Waiting for Noriega to Overstep," *Washington Post*, (May 2, 1991) and Bob Woodward, *The Commanders*, (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2002).

²⁶¹ TF GREEN executed this mission as planned with no casualties. Although two aircraft crashed during the operation (one on infil one on exfil) they were successful in rescuing the hostage. ACID GAMBIT normally is credited as the first successful military hostage by SFOD-D. Bob Woodward, *The Commanders*, goes into more details of the JSOC involvement in the operation to include JSOC force options NIFTY PACKAGE and GABEL ADDER which would have also included SEAL Team 6. Bob Woodward, *The Commanders*, (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 138.

²⁶² In 2002 a parole hearing took place in Miami, which resulted in Noriega's denial for early release from his U.S. prison sentence. Eventually, a conditional release was granted on September 23, 2011. Robert Jackson, *LA Times*, "Noriega Gets 40 Years in Prison: Sentence: Penalty amounts to a life term, as former Panama strongman, now 58, is unlikely to win parole. He was convicted in April on eight drug-related counts." (11 July 1992) website: http://articles.latimes.com/1992-07-11/news/mn-1481_1_prison-term, (accessed 16 November 2012).

²⁶³ Although SOF units played a major role in Operation JUST CAUSE by the definitions used throughout this paper the actions were *in support of a conventional warfare campaign*.

unconventional warfare may have been used to better effect and was not. It is impossible to speculate after the fact, or attempt to determine the results of a possible supported UW effort. Yet, an *organic* movement existed, indicated by the two coups that transpired, the goals of which were to unseat Noriega's power. Aside from speculation, the UW option was not developed and conventional warfare intervention was deemed necessary. Events of December '89 (the PDF assault against the four U.S. officers) became a tipping point in which the narrative was at the highest level of receptiveness. It served as a 'last straw' for a cause that was gaining momentum; the culminating event that justified U.S. action.

3. Analysis

The following sections of this chapter will highlight significant factors that constrained decision makers from choosing an unconventional warfare option in Panama. These factors are categorized into internal enablers, internal constraints, external enablers, and external constraints. In contrast to the previous cases, the constraints for UW outweighed the enablers, resulting in the conventional military operation.

a. Decision Point

In the case of Panama, the decision point appears to have occurred between August of 1989 and October of 1989. The pre-decision time period is marked by events, both internal and external, that show preparation, all be it in conventional military options, and necessitate action. The nullified elections of May of 1989 led to the U.S. suspending military aid to Panama. In the United States, President Bush and Secretary Cheney appointed General Powell as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. To the right of the decision point, events or activities that show increased throughput and/or output indicate a decision had occurred. During the post-decision period, the internal event was the JCS ordering final revisions to the Op Plan. The external event on the right of the decision point was the second coup against Noriega. The *Black Tuesday* coup

could have been supported by the U.S. if they had not already decided to forego unconventional warfare means and use the option of conventional military operations. Since the methodology to effect change was Operation JUST CAUSE, the final decision was marked by this output of the military complex (see Figure 11).

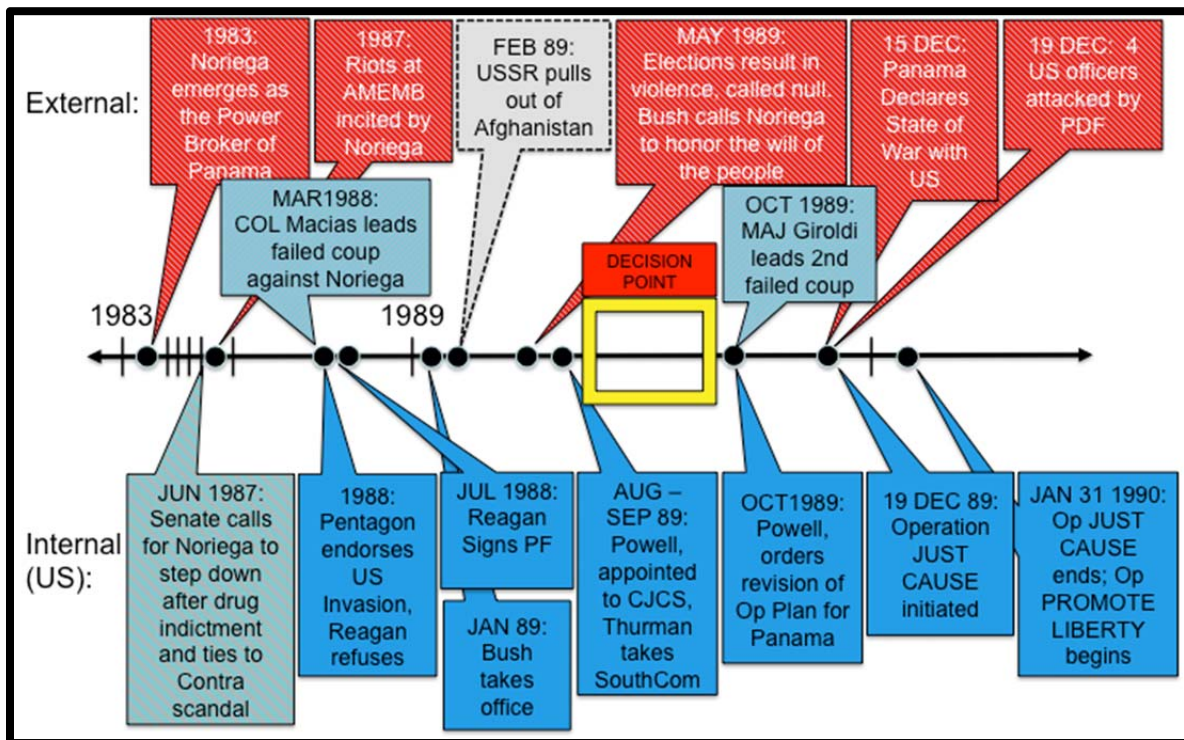


Figure 11. Decision Point Timeline for Panama

b. Internal Enablers

Policy Affected By Politics, Constraining Conventional Warfare. The Reagan administration was split on the military option. The State Department supported military intervention but the Defense Department and the JCS opposed it.²⁶⁴ Because of Vice President Bush's background in the CIA,

²⁶⁴ Demetrios James Caraley, *The New American Interventionism: Lessons from Success and Failures: Essays Political Science Quarterly*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 98.

and his previous connection to Noriega, then National Security Advisor to President Reagan, LTG Powell passed the word to SouthCom that everything to do with Noriega was on the back burner until after the election. The administration did not want any negative publicity to hurt Bush's chance of election.²⁶⁵ On 25 April, however, Treasury Secretary Jim Baker said, "There are other things that you can do but they all involve putting our military assets into play, and we're not going to do that."²⁶⁶ Speaker of the House Jim Wright said, "obviously we don't want to go [to Panama] with the force of military arms - that's ridiculous."²⁶⁷ Seemingly, the constraints put on conventional military options coupled with the need for action²⁶⁸ would be ideal conditions for UW options to be developed. However, the constraints below prevented this enabler from tipping the scales for UW.

Narrative supported Organic Solutions. Many high level U.S. military officers and politicians on both sides felt that the crisis in Panama was primarily an internal affair that should be resolved internally, if at all possible, by means of a Panamanian solution to a Panamanian problem. The situation should not be allowed to degenerate into a full-scale U.S.-Panamanian confrontation.²⁶⁹ This set prime conditions to justify funding an *organic-revolution*, if one could only be identified.

265 Fredrick Kempe, *Divorcing the Dictator: America's Bungled Affair with Noriega*, (Putnam Adult, 1990), 333.

266 Demetrios James Caraley, "The New American Interventionism: Lessons from Success and Failures," *Essays Political Science Quarterly*, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999), 98.

267 Demetrios James Caraley, "The New American Interventionism: Lessons from Success and Failures," *Essays Political Science Quarterly*, (Columbia University Press, September 15, 1999), 98.

268 Displayed by the drug related indictments in 1986, Senate's nonbinding resolution to ask Noriega to step down, the riots at the American Embassy in '87, President Reagan's signing of the findings in '88.

269 Lawrence A. Yates, *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama Origins, Planning, and Crisis Management June 1987–December 1989*, Contingency Operations Series (Washington DC, Center of Military History, 2008), 21.

c. External Enablers

Need for Intervention. In spite of the Macias led coup attempt in 1988, it seemed that Noriega would remain in power. Since other political means had been unsuccessful in ousting Noriega and congressional and public pressure to remove him was mounting, administration officials raised and debated the military option.²⁷⁰ Senator Alfonse D'Amato accused the Department of Defense and the JCS of being "cowards" for their lack of military decisiveness in Panama. D'Amato claimed he had been misunderstood, but he still continued to favor the use of force in Panama.²⁷¹ After Noriega nullified the election of May 1989, sending the PDF out to crack down on dissidents and exact violence on political nominees, external circumstances were now necessitating intervention. Winner writes, "Many non-military options were considered, but after Panama's fraudulent elections and several casualties attendant to them, the Bush administration found itself forced to consider military options. Noriega's aggressive and incendiary rhetoric finally forced the hand of U.S. policy makers."²⁷²

Found–Organic Movement, Sponsor Needed. The failed coup of 16 March 1988 led by Panamanian Chief of Police, Colonel Leonidas Macias, showed promise that the organic movements were in place in which people were now willing to make risk in order attain change. The coup failed, not due to lack of willingness. Rather, the coup likely failed due to poor planning or double agents within the coup participants who informed Noriega. The failed coup led to Noriega soliciting and receiving support from U.S. competitors (Cuba, Nicaragua, and Libya), and ultimately was the impetus for military planners to develop and

270 Demetrios James Caraley, "The New American Interventionism: Lessons from Success and Failures: *Essays Political Science Quarterly*" (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999), 98.

271 Demetrios James Caraley, "The New American Interventionism: Lessons from Success and Failures": *Essays Political Science Quarterly*, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999), 99.

272 Don Winner, "Operation Just Cause': A Historical Analysis," July 2008. From Panama Guide.com, <http://www.panama-guide.com/article.php/2008071811104739>, (Accessed 18 November 2012).

refine contingency operations. Reagan still encouraged the PDF to topple Noriega. Then, under the direction of Major Giroldi, a second plot to overthrow Noriega was kindled from within the Panamanian ranks. On 3 October 1989, a coup was initiated and foiled after Noriega was able to contact his special unit, Battalion 2000, who came to his aid. This resulted in more purging within the PDF ranks and increased security force repression on civilian dissenters. Furthermore PDF harassment of Americans intensified, ultimately proving a tipping point on 19 December 1989 four officers were attacked by PDF and one was killed. The two coups proved a potential for *organic-revolution* existed. If the movements were developed through U.S. sponsorship, an unconventional warfare solution may have been an option. This enabler was overcome by both events shaping subsequent U.S. policy and actions, but also the pre-existing conditions of post Iran-Contra America, and the political time horizon presented with the upcoming Presidential election in the U.S.

The Soviets Lose In Afghanistan, U.S. Intervention Possibly Unchecked. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a response to the failures of the Communist puppet government installed after the fall of the Afghan monarchy. The Soviet's 40th Army was sent to secure the country and provide time and space for the communist government in Afghanistan to consolidate control. What followed was a nine-year proxy war beginning on 25 December 1979. The United States' involvement in the resistance against the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan was partly borne from opportunity to attrite its main adversary, but also in an effort to limit the spread of Communism from Central Asia into Southwest Asia.²⁷³

The U.S. headed a coalition of covert supporters of the *organic*-resistance, or Mujahedeen, including Pakistan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and

²⁷³ *Charlie Wilson's War*. 165

China.²⁷⁴ The U.S. support to the Afghan resistance (starting at \$20–30 Million per year in 1980, peaking to \$630 Million in 1987)²⁷⁵ was relatively cheap compared to 13–15 Billion Rubles spent by the Soviets from 1979–1986 (equating to \$382 - \$441 Billion USD).²⁷⁶ This low cost returned high value in the number of Soviet aircraft losses, casualties, and lost prestige. Steve Coll, author of *Ghost Wars* writes, “the money allocated secretly by Congress each year for weapons for the mujahedeen was destroying Soviet equipment and personnel worth eight to ten times that amount or more.”²⁷⁷ Much debate continues on the subject of whether the high cost of war in Afghanistan is directly attributable to the financial woes of the Soviets. No doubt, Afghanistan had an effect on the USSR budget, but many believe that the downfall of the Soviets was inevitable, even without a war in Central Asia.

The war was costly for the Soviets, in both blood and treasure. Following the Soviet retreat from Afghanistan, their ability to intervene in international matters was questionable. Through mirroring, reflecting U.S. constraints of waging war immediately following Vietnam or Korea, Washington may have deemed the Soviets as likely to be in a similar position. This could

274 Pakistan demanded, quite to the liking of a Vietnam scarred CIA, absolute control of all weapons, finances, training, and handling of Afghan resistance. Additionally, the sanctuary provided by Pakistan was critical for rotating forces out of the fight, allowing for training and equipping, and the robust topography of the border area provided natural protection. Saudi Arabia, answering the call of their fellow Muslims but more scared that the Soviets would invade them next if unstopped, provided robust financial support, matching U.S. funding.²⁷⁴ They also provided covered airlift of supplies sent from the U.S. to Saudi Arabia, and then reloaded on Saudi aircraft and sent to Pakistan. China, who after a falling out with the Soviets in the 1960s became regional rivals and bitter enemies, supported CIA efforts to provide Afghan resistance with weapons non-attributable to the U.S.. Tens of millions of dollars in arms deals annually cemented a growing secret anti-Soviet collaboration between the CIA and Chinese Intelligence . Source: *Charlie Wilson's War*. 165, 236–237.; Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The secret history of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, from the Soviet invasion to September 10, 2001*, (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2004), 66, 72–73.

275 Peter Bergen, *Holy War Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden*, (New York, NY: Free Press, 2001), 68.

276 Directorate of Intelligence Report: *The Costs of Soviet Involvement in Afghanistan*. 1986. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/us8.pdf>, (Accessed 17 March, 2012). p.iii; Exchange rate data website: <http://rub.fx-exchange.com/usd/1986-exchange-rates.html>, (accessed 17 March, 2012).

277 *Ghost Wars*, 68.

prove two things of interest: first, the Cold War could be ending soon and the once reliable and steady constraint to U.S. intervention was now potentially closing shop. U.S. military ventures could potentially go unchecked, or at least passively supported by the myriad of nations indebted to U.S. support against the Soviets. Secondly, U.S. UW efforts in Afghanistan were a success and would add to the influence on policy factor, providing the decision makers a recent example of the utility of UW.

d. Internal Constraints

Colin Powell Key Enabler to CW. According to Michael Gordon's *New York Times* article,²⁷⁸ Colin Powell was critical of existing military plans to overthrow Noriega. After taking his new position in August 1989, he initiated revised planning to quicken the timeline for the military to reach its objectives. This was an effort to make a high-tempo conflict more palatable by the American public, who still were reluctant to support potential repeats of the Vietnam War and its long duration. Gordon writes, "There is an old saying in strategic philosophy that capabilities create their own intentions. By changing the war plans, General Powell made it more feasible for President Bush to order a full-scale attack on Panama." In addition to the updated plans, Powell was able to sell the public on the plan as he handled the media with expertise, he "calmly explained the mission to a packed room of reporters, addressing them by their first names as the Bush Administration sought public backing for its intervention."²⁷⁹ General Powell was a key personality, in both closeness to the President as the Chairman of the JCS, and also in his understanding of military capability and public consumption of white house policy. He was a key proponent of conventional military action.

278 Michael R. Gordon, *The New York Times*, "Fighting in Panama: The Chief of Staff; Vital for the Invasion: Politically Attuned General," (New York, NY), Published 25 December 1989. NY Times website: <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/12/25/world/fighting-panama-chief-staff-vital-for-invasion-politically-attuned-general.html>, (accessed 16 November 2012).

279 Michael R. Gordon, *The New York Times*, "Fighting in Panama."

Weak Intelligence And Foundation To Build On. Panama Defense Forces were the primary partner of the U.S. intelligence community in the country, if not the region. When the crisis began to erode the long-standing cooperative relationship between them, it left the U.S. Intelligence community with few options. While open sources remained available and valuable, other avenues of collection began to close down. SouthCom tried to adapt to the deteriorating situation, but, according to one Intelligence officer's assessment, "The entire U.S. intelligence complex was ill-prepared to initiate intensive collection operations against Panama."²⁸⁰ For this to happen in a country where U.S. personnel had complete freedom of movement, 14 military bases, and up to 25,000 personnel is a harsh lesson learned. U.S. Intelligence in Panama DoD, DIA, CIA, etc., had grown so reliant on using the Panamanians that they failed to develop unilateral networks and sources adequate to collect either tactical intelligence²⁸¹ or run covert UW operations as needed. This limitation, primarily a lack of a foundation of networks and infrastructure to build on or transition into UW would constrain the development of such a plan.²⁸²

Political Capital Deficiency from Watergate. According to Crile, in the post-Watergate period, the Carter Administration promised to reign in the

280 Message from 470th Military Intelligence Bde to U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM), dated 232235ZFEB89, quoted by Yates in *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama*.

281 Lawrence A. Yates, *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama Origins, Planning, and Crisis Management June 1987–December 1989*, Contingency Operations Series (Washington DC, Center of Military History, 2008), 22–23.

282 Prior to the crisis U.S. intelligence officers enjoyed daily liaison with their Panamanian counterparts and had ready access to PDF bases and posts, as well as to the posted orders of the day. Panamanian forces also "tacitly cooperated" with American efforts to collect intelligence on other countries in the region, especially El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Cuba. When the crisis began to erode the cooperative relationship between U.S. intelligence personnel and the Panama Defense Forces, open sources remained available and valuable but other avenues of collection began to close down. The Southern Command tried to adapt to the deteriorating situation, but, according to one mid-crisis assessment, "the entire U.S. intelligence complex was ill-prepared to initiate intensive collection operations against Panama." Yates, *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama*, 22.

CIA and “had all but promised an end to the CIA’s dirty tricks.”²⁸³ Carter’s handpicked CIA chief, Admiral Stansfield Turner cleaned house and purged the agency of many officers seasoned in covert operations.²⁸⁴ Momentum continued and many thought the CIA would be stripped of its authority to conduct covert operations altogether.²⁸⁵ Although this was overcome later during Reagan’s administration, specifically during the Iran-Contra affair, the cumulative effect of two significant blowback events left the organizations responsible for developing UW constrained.

Fallout from the Iran-Contra Affair. CIA Director William H. Webster (1987–1991) came from a legal background, including serving as a Federal judge and as the Director of the FBI. He was expected, with this background, to clear out all irregularities in legality at CIA and clean house following the Iran-Contra arms smuggling scandal. In terms of popularity, the Iran-Contra was the Vietnam War of UW; people did not want a repeat anytime soon. The fallout was an Agency, Administration, Congress, and public who were leery of any CIA covert operations. While numerous Presidential findings preceded the conventional invasion, they were limited in scope and several were exposed to the public immediately in order to avoid Iran-Contra like backlash. This constrained the freedom of maneuver on the ground for U.S. personnel, restrained the behavior within the organizations responsible for developing UW capabilities, and would curtail likely approvals for a UW operation even if it were developed. In fact, Congress and the Reagan administration agreed to guidelines that sharply restricted covert activities against Noriega. JCS, and CIA signed and made public an agreement that limited covert action in Panama.²⁸⁶

283 George Crile, *Charlie Wilson’s War: The extraordinary story of how the wildest man in Congress and a rogue CIA agent changed the history of our times*, (New York, NY: Grove Press, 2003), 14.

284 *Charlie Wilson’s War*, 14.

285 *Charlie Wilson’s War*, 14.

286 Davis Hoffman, David B. Ottaway “Limit on covert action allegedly tailored to ‘88 presidential bid,” *Washington Post* TUE 10/24/1989 HOUSTON CHRONICLE, Section A, Page 8, 2 STAR Edition from http://www.chron.com/CDA/archives/archive.mpl/1989_658770/limit-on-covert-action-allegedly-tailored-to-88-pr.html (accessed on 13 November 2012).

Personalities with a Penchant for Combat Actions. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, GEN Colin Powell (who had also just assumed his position as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS]), were both very conventional military minded and often openly opposed covert (UW) type actions.²⁸⁷ General Powell was the senior military advisor to Secretary of Defense Weinberger during OP URGENT FURY in Grenada and the airstrikes against President Kaddafi in Libya. These operations were both stepping-stones for the U.S. military complex as they retooled after the Vietnam War, delivering quickly achieved objectives to the American public.

e. External Constraints

Democracy Across the Region. Recent successes in promoting democracy in the Philippines and Haiti (where the United States had facilitated the removal of Presidents Ferdinand Marcos and Jean-Claude Duvalier, respectively), coupled by several South and Central American nations embracing democracy and ending dictatorships brought optimism to the problems in Panama. Chile's election in 1988 ended Pinochet's dictatorial presidency; Paraguay saw a military coup ending Stroessner's 35-year dictatorship; Brazil saw the first democratically elected president in 29 years in the 1989 election; in February. This could have constrained any action, yet the conventional military option was ultimately enabled by the need to intervene (as stated above).

4. Summary

In contrast to the other cases, in Panama the enablers for UW were outweighed by the constraints resulting in a decision to conduct a conventional military campaign. With Politics and Policy demanding delays for intervention and

²⁸⁷ As Powell said in an April 1, 2009 interview on *The Rachel Maddow Show*, the Doctrine denotes the exhausting of all "political, economic, and diplomatic means," which, only if those means prove to be futile, should a nation resort to military force. Powell has expanded upon the Doctrine, asserting that when a nation is engaging in war, every resource and tool should be used to achieve decisive force against the enemy, minimizing U.S. casualties and ending the conflict quickly by forcing the weaker force to capitulate. Colin Powell, interviewed by Rachel Maddow, *The Rachel Maddow Show*, MSNBC, 1 April 2009.

providing time, as well as a U.S. desire to have Panamanians fix a Panamanian problem, conditions were set that would enable UW. However, from the influence of Colin Powell and other key personalities that preferred military action, coupled with the weak intelligence and lack of an existing foundation to transition into UW, as well as the fall out from Watergate and the Iran-Contra scandals, conventional methods would reign. Additionally, the potential that the USSR may not be able to check U.S. intervention at large, may also have driven home a desire to utilize the U.S. military complex. Ultimately, it was the constraints against UW that helped select military intervention through decisive battle. Interestingly, similar to events in Iran in 1953, the timing of this operation was by design alone and initiative was in the hands of the U.S.

The next chapter will be the comparative analysis of all of the enablers derived from the case studies. These enablers will be examined and then determined if their presence is in multiple cases. From this, a theory of the factors that lead decision makers to select unconventional warfare options will be presented.

IV. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

“Without Revolutionary theory, there can be no Revolutionary Movement.”

— Vladimir Ilyich Lenin ²⁸⁸

A. ANALYSIS OF THE ENABLERS

Author T. E. Lawrence in *The Evolution of a Revolt* claimed that he “would prove irregular war or rebellion to be an exact science, and an inevitable success, granted certain factors and if pursued along certain lines.”²⁸⁹ Lawrence was unable to prove rebellion to be an exact science, but his claim that certain *factors* influenced the outcome is a valid scientific concept that looks for the causal relationships in a process or phenomenon.²⁹⁰ In this analysis, an attempt has been made to identify conditions that led to decisions for or against the use of UW. In each of the cases that were examined, the policies, strategies, decisions, and events that led to a decision point were extracted. Those that leaned towards the decision to choose UW over no action or conventional warfare were listed as *enablers*. What follows is a comparative analysis of the *enablers* out of four cases. Enablers were reduced to their simplest form and generalized to allow cross case comparison.

Seventeen separate enablers were identified that potentially swayed the decision to use UW in the four cases within this research. In this chapter, we focus on eleven enablers that are most commonly observed. Once simplified, the enablers were put into a chart to allow comparison across the cases (see Figures

²⁸⁸ James D. White, *Lenin: The Practice and Theory of Revolution, European History in Perspective*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

²⁸⁹ T. E. Lawrence, “The Evolution Of A Revolt,” CSI Reprint, *Army Quarterly and Defense Journal*, (1 West Street, Tavistock, Devon PL19 8DS United Kingdom), From <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/carl/lawrence.htm> P.21, (accessed on 20 November 2012).

²⁹⁰ The concept of order maintained by the *law of cause and effect* is a scientific principle with a history traceable through Hebrew, Babylonian, Greek, and modern civilizations. This idea was first thought to be expressed by Hippocrates of Cos, (c. 460–377 B.C.): “Every natural event has a natural cause.” See Jack Meadows, *The Great Scientists*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 12.

12 and 13). Blue factors were identified during the case study analysis, red factors were found present after comparing cases, and black enablers were specific to only three cases or less. An analysis helps extract certain factors that may serve as a proposed model of UW. The next step will be to tentatively propose some general propositions regarding UW decisions that will require further testing in future research.

While this selection rationale is not yet tested, the findings from this study demonstrate that the frequency of occurrence deserves a more thorough examination. The eleven enablers were checked for validity and confirmed to be present across all four cases. Four enablers were also located in the non-UW case Panama. These particular enablers were no longer 'factors' that led to choosing UW as an option and were subsequently removed. The seven remaining *enablers* that became generalized into *factors* are:

- F1. A strategy exists that supports the development of an UW mechanism in the steady state.
- F2. A UW experienced organization exists.
- F3. UW experienced individual(s) had direct access or influence on the Decision Maker (DM)
- F4. New Decision Maker inherited a course of action (COA) leading to UW.
- F5. UW successes increased influence on DM.
- F6. When conditions do not predicate an immediate CW response UW remains an option.
- F7. UW decision followed a decisive CW action.

Iran	Tibet	Laos	Nicaragua	Panama
A strategy existed supporting the development of a UW mechanism in the <i>steady state</i> .	A strategy existed supporting the development of a UW mechanism in the <i>steady state</i> .	A strategy existed supporting the development of a UW mechanism in the <i>steady state</i> .	A strategy existed supporting the development of a UW mechanism in the <i>steady state</i> .	
A UW experienced organization existed	A UW experienced organization existed	A UW experienced organization existed	A UW experienced organization existed	
UW experienced individual(s) influential to DM.	UW experienced individual(s) influential to DM.	UW experienced individual(s) influential to DM.	UW experienced individual(s) influential to DM.	
New decision maker (DM) inherited a COA leading to UW.	New decision maker (DM) inherited a COA leading to UW.	New decision maker (DM) inherited a COA leading to UW.	New decision maker (DM) inherited a COA leading to UW.	
UW success increased influence on DM	UW success increased influence on DM	UW success increased influence on DM	UW success increased influence on DM	
UW not constrained when conditions do not predicate an immediate CW response.	UW remains an option when conditions do not predicate an immediate CW response.	UW remains an option when conditions do not predicate an immediate CW response.	UW remains an option when conditions do not predicate an immediate CW response.	
UW decision followed a decisive CW action	UW decision followed a decisive CW action	UW decision followed a decisive CW action	UW decision followed a decisive CW action	

Figure 12. Enablers Consistent in All Four Cases and Identified as General UW Factors

Iran	Tibet	Laos	Nicaragua	Panama
External conditions necessitated US action based on "Interventionist" strategy.	External conditions necessitated US action based on "Interventionist" strategy.	External conditions necessitated US action based on "Interventionist" strategy.	External conditions necessitated US action based on "Interventionist" strategy.	External conditions necessitated US action based on "Interventionist" strategy.
UW was one LOO in regional strategy.	UW was one LOO in regional strategy.	UW was one LOO in regional strategy.	UW was one LOO in regional strategy.	UW was one LOO in regional strategy.
The mission had a marketable narrative.	The mission had a marketable narrative.	The mission had a marketable narrative.	The mission had a marketable narrative.	The mission had a marketable narrative.
Narrative supported organic solutions.	Narrative supported organic solutions.	Narrative supported organic solutions.	Narrative supported organic solutions.	Narrative supported organic solutions.
	Policy was effected by Politics which constrained CW.			Policy was effected by Politics which constrained CW.
		The covert nature of UW allows circumvention of accountability	The covert nature of UW allows circumvention of accountability	
US executed our allies strategy	Military commitment elsewhere limited CW option			An organic movement Existed
Treaties existed that led to either UW or CW				

Figure 13. Enablers Specific to Particular Cases, Insufficient to be General Factors

The final step in analysis was to group and combine the factors to form variables. These variables, explained in detail below, propose a conceptual framework related to the decision to use UW as a strategic option.

1. Variable 1. Extant UW Capability

A *UW capability*, as defined by this study, is a combination of three elements: the *mechanism*, *authorities*, and *organizations*. Variable 1 is a combination between F1 and F2 (F1, “A strategy exists that supports the development of a UW mechanism in the steady state,” and F2, “A UW experienced organization exists”).

A *mechanism* manifests as growing relationships, networks, and infrastructures in the target country that supports a UW campaign. The UW mechanism was developed in all four of the cases in this study prior to a UW decision point for different purposes, such as intelligence gathering or military advisory. The mechanisms could be utilized to support UW when needed. In each of the cases, when a decision was made to commit to a UW option, there were already relationships established between U.S. executors and key host nation personnel that made it a viable option. These relationships and networks were already established in the *steady state* prior to the decision made by policy makers to utilize UW. In some cases, the mechanism was established by a third nation but used by the U.S. to facilitate UW.

In Panama, the lack of a UW capability is attributable to identifying, co-opting, or developing the movement that led to the failed coups against Noriega. Mainly due to the long-standing relationship between the U.S. and Panama, there was also a shortfall in developing independent relationships or networks separate from the Panamanian's. A lack of U.S. mechanisms was identified by CIA director William Casey who believed one of the weaknesses of the CIA at the time was a lack of unilateral U.S. assets and an over reliance on in-country intelligence sources “subject to the whims and fortunes of those in power.”²⁹¹ This lack of a pre-existing UW capability promoted the use of conventional

²⁹¹ Bob Woodward, *Veil, The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981–1987*, (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1987), 114.

warfare or it would have forced the decision makers to accept the time delay necessary to develop the UW mechanisms that were not present.²⁹²

The factors identified in this research point to the common existence of a pre-developed UW capability established *prior* to the decision point. With the exception of the non-case, the data does not exclude the possibility that a valid UW capability could be built *after* the decision. Relationships or networks can be built post-decision, but will undoubtedly extend the time from the decision point to utilize UW to the actual start point of a UW campaign. A lack of preparation may likely impact the decision negatively as much as a preexisting capability affects the decision positively.

The second element of this variable is *authority*, or the presence of authorities, policies, and strategies, which allow the UW mechanism to be developed in preparation for an executable strategic policy option. For the execution of an actual campaign once the decision is made, authorities must be in place. Without either the mechanism or authorities, the UW capability does not exist. Therefore, the decision to use UW could not be a valid option.

The third and final element of UW Capability is the *organization*, which defines 'who' will utilize the mechanism enabled by the authority. Although this study did not find that a standing organization was required, it appears that having a standing organization that is designated for, trained, and experienced in UW increases UW capability. In the cases in this study each had standing organizations, civilian and military, that were prepared to execute varied actions in support of a UW campaign. An experienced organization provides vetted processes to facilitate the preparation and execution of UW. As observed in all of this study's cases, the legacy of the OSS through the personnel and

292 According to U.S. Intelligence personnel assigned to SouthCom "the entire U.S. intelligence complex was ill-prepared to initiate intensive collection operations against Panama." Lawrence A. Yates, *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama Origins, Planning, and Crisis Management June 1987–December 1989*, (Center Of Military History United States Army, Washington, D.C., 2008), 22.

institutionalized knowledge was transferred into the newly established organizations of the CIA and U.S. Army Special Forces. Iran specifically was the beginning of the fusion. McClure, then the military attaché, had already facilitated the beginning of U.S. Army Special Forces.

Mechanism, Authorities, and Organizations are the three elements that, when combined, forms the hypothesis: “The existence of a UW capability prior to the decision point is positively associated with a decision to utilize UW.”

2. Variable 2. The Presence of Positive UW Feedback Loops

This variable posits that there is a relatively higher degree of influence on the decision maker to choose UW over conventional warfare because of past experience. A trusted advisor, or many, can positively or negatively impact the decision to conduct UW. In the cases of Iran, Tibet, and Laos, Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy had maintained the Dulles brothers as head of the CIA and Secretary of State. In Nicaragua, President Reagan maintained Bill Casey as the director of the CIA. In the counter case, Panama, President Bush appointed General Colin Powell as a member of the inner circle. Powell favored conventional warfare with no alternate voice advocating a UW alternative.

This variable contains three factors that influence the Decision Maker (DM) towards UW. The first is the network of trusted advisors F3, “UW experienced individual(s) had direct access or influence on the Decision Maker.” Such is the trusted advisors to the DM that influence the decision to engage in UW. The second is the existing momentum from previous actions and conditions initiated by F4, “New Decision Maker inherited a course of action leading to UW.” The final is F5, “UW successes increased influence on DM.” The past success of F5 is the part of the variable that increases expectations for the DM.

Many of the decision points in these cases fell shortly after a change in decision makers, which is F4, “New Decision Maker inherited a COA leading to UW.” Eisenhower took office only weeks before the decision was made to oust

Mosadegh. Reagan inherited Nicaragua. Kennedy inherited Laos and Cuba when he took office. F5, "UW successes increased influence on DM," is related to a series of UW successes building momentum, making it easy for the DM to sense a higher chance of success. When the decision is made, the question asked, "Is the risk worth the reward?" Based on the course of action already pre-determined, the external influence of past missions' successes, and the internal influence of trusted advisors, the influence on the DM affects his expectations of the outcome of his decision.

This category can produce several hypotheses combined or separated by factors. Combined: *"Trusted advisors with a preference for UW, combined with past UW successes, and a developing UW course of action with growing inertia, influence decision makers to choose UW courses of action."*

Additional studies into leadership theory and decision-making have long proposed that, "Leadership in the modern presidency is not carried out by the President alone, but rather by Presidents with their associates. It depends therefore on both the president's strengths and weaknesses and on the quality of the aides' support."²⁹³ The establishment of the National Security Council in 1947 and its subsequent relocation to the executive office of the president in 1949 also reinforces the strength of the advisory relationship.

Variable 1 may seem intuitive and possibly applied to CW operations. However, the covert nature of UW and the risk-to-reward ratio may make this truer for UW than CW. President Kennedy took command of an empowered CIA enjoying a series of successes, and was faced with difficult UW decisions in Laos and Cuba. While not selected for this study, Operation ZAPATA--the invasion of Cuba--was a clear case where UW was selected from a combination of all of these factors. When deciding on the invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, in 1972 Irving L. Janis concluded that President Kennedy and his advisors had succumbed to a phenomenon he coined "group think." He described it as, "a

²⁹³ Fred I. Greenstein, *Leadership in the Modern Presidency*, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1995), 352.

mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' striving for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action."²⁹⁴

The different individual factors can lead to separate hypotheses. F3, "*DMs with UW experienced trusted advisors tend to choose UW over CW.*" This may also be bi-directional as shown in the case of Panama. Additional cases of CW would have to be compared to validate this theory.

F4, "*New Decision Maker inherited a COA leading to UW,*" also seems to apply to both UW and CW and may speak to advisors manipulating this trend either consciously or subconsciously.

F5, "*Past UW successes lead to higher percentages of the choice for UW.*" F5 relates to the idea that a learned behavior is an action or decision that was observed by an individual or group that they find to be beneficial to them in some way. There is an expected reward acting as a motivating force behind the decision. Past success or failures are forms of momentum or inertia that happen, and have shown in this study to impact DMs. In the case of successes, the CIA had a long string of what were deemed successful operations that gained momentum for their methodology during the Cold War. These decisions were built on the successes that the OSS had earned from World War II. The personnel transferred into the CIA, adding to the CIA's reputation and influence. In the cases where UW was deemed a failure or had negative public support (such as Albania, The Bay of Pigs, Indonesia, Nicaragua) the momentum turned the other way towards conventional warfare operations.

3. Variable 3. The Impracticality of Conventional Warfare

When conventional warfare campaigns are ruled out, unconventional warfare campaigns provide decision makers with an easier choice; a lower threshold of resources and the potential for less public scrutiny if they remain

²⁹⁴ Irving L. Janis, *Victims of Groupthink*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1972), 9.

covert. UW campaigns usually require longer duration or at least foresight. Impracticality of CW can manifest due to any number of reasons. The causes for impracticality are varied. These could include: insufficient capacity, political capital, domestic support, national will, fiscal restraint, legislative restriction, or treaty obligation. Regardless, it precludes the use of conventional warfare campaigns or makes them less practical for use in the specific situation. Examples from the research include: the case of Iran and Tibet, where the U.S. was still impacted by its huge losses in Korea. The U.S. had also tied up much of its conventional military forces in the defense of Europe. In Laos, the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Accords prevented an overt U.S. military presence. In Nicaragua neither U.S. Congress nor the public would have supported a conventional invasion in the aftermath of Vietnam.

Similar to the other variables, this variable can be combined to form a hypothesis: *“When the use of CW is impractical, UW becomes a more likely choice for decision makers.”*

Relating to conventional warfare and its *impracticality* in a specific situation are F6, *“UW is not constrained when conditions do not predicate an immediate CW response,”* and F7, *“UW decision followed a decisive CW action.”* F6 presents the time necessary to set up a UW option. UW is a valid choice if time is no constraint. With F7, *“a UW decision followed a decisive CW action,”* similar to F5, the effect of learned behaviors is addressed. A momentum is formed based on perceived loss or failure that can influence the decision for an opposite course of action. The most costly battle of the Korean War occurred weeks before the decision was made to use UW in Iran. While it is questionable that conventional warfare was ever a practical option, the recent losses impacted both decision makers and the American public. The negative effects were likely a consideration if not a major factor enabling UW. The reverse of this is true. For instance, the perceived failure of the UW operation in Nicaragua and the scandal that followed the public Iran-Contra hearings led to reductions in capabilities and less trust in UW. The result likely affected the decision to use CW in the invasion

of Panama, despite the opportunities for UW that were presented on several occasions prior to the decision point.

Variables 2 and 3 are conditional to the decision to use UW. They may affect the decision maker, but based on their value, neither is judged to sufficiently cause the decision to be made independent of variable 1. High levels of confidence and expectations of success in the operation, combined with the lack of conventional forces available for the operation, undoubtedly have a major influence on the decision maker. It is the *capability* to conduct an operation, which is a combination of sufficient mechanisms and authorities that is the one variable required to conduct the mission. Therefore, the combination of all three variables can also synthesize into a conceptual framework (see Figure 14):

The Decision to use Unconventional Warfare is dependent on a UW Capability, Influence on Policy, and the Impracticality of Conventional Warfare. UW Capability is the summation of Authority, Organization, and Mechanism. Influence on Policy is a result of UW successes, continuation of inherited courses of action, and council from Trusted Advisor(s). The Impracticality of Conventional Warfare can be a result of any number of causes.

It should be noted that the above framework's primary purpose is to provide a basis for additional theory development and structured empirical research.²⁹⁵ It thus should not be regarded as a tested hypothesis.

²⁹⁵ Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, (Boston: The MIT Press, 2005).

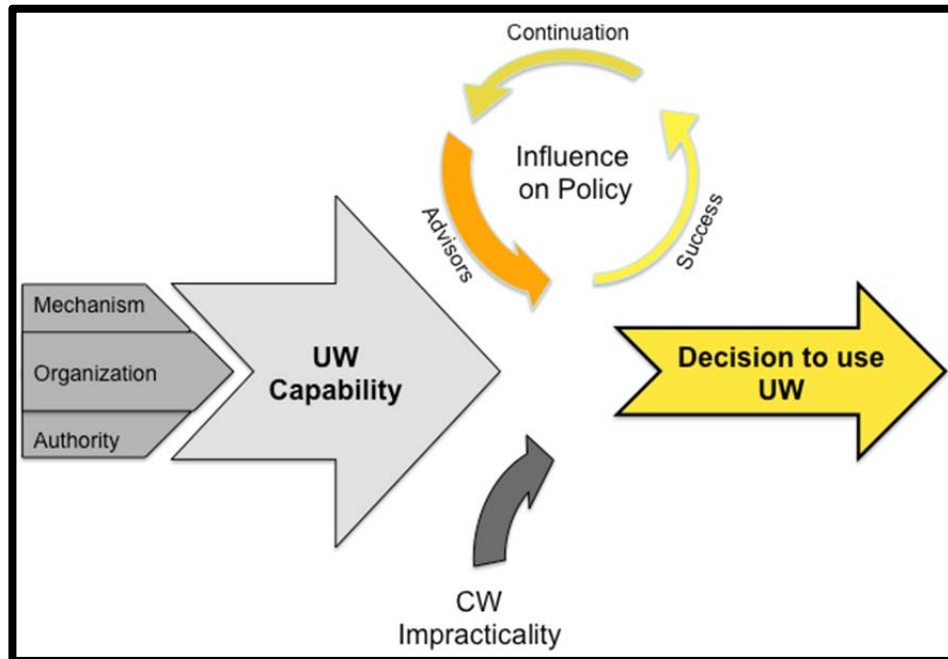


Figure 14. Conceptual Framework of Variables 1, 2 and 3

B. ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Some findings from the research did not directly answer the research question, related to *why* the *decision to use UW was made*. These additional findings are nonetheless important to discuss in this thesis in order to further understand the field of UW. The findings are grouped by related topics, and because they were a byproduct of the study, do not follow a specific format. Supporting examples from the cases are provided to demonstrate the findings' consistency across the cases. Whether these findings are consistent across the entire field of UW, or not, are questions for possible follow up research in the subject field.

1. Expanding and Refining UW Knowledgebase

This study found that a definitive database of UW cases does not exist. This is in part due to the many definition changes throughout the years, identified in the introduction of this work. The positive side to this deficiency speaks to the

value of the new definition, how it helped re-shape the landscape of what UW is, therefore, expanding the field of UW cases.

The first group of findings was discovered while attempting to identify a conclusive list of all cases of U.S. sponsored UW. In an effort to identify a body of cases to choose from, our initial research identified 51 likely cases of U.S. sponsored UW, not including campaigns in support of conventional warfare. While the cases outside of those analyzed in this paper were unconfirmed, or validated, the number is still many times higher than previously identified. The *UW Leaders Handbook* lists fifteen cases, but includes both UW in support of general war and limited war.²⁹⁶ Once this field expedient database was crafted, one of the first assumptions was shattered. It was assumed that the failure of the Bay of Pigs would have initiated a decline in use of UW or marked the high point in the number of cases of the Cold War. However, these ideas were unfounded.

Another key assumption about the period in which the most observed cases of U.S. unconventional warfare fall in, was the notion that the Cold War environmental circumstances were causal to the high number of cases. These environmental circumstances of the period, which were defined by the bi-polar world, existential threat, mutual assured destruction, and nuclear deterrence so commonly characteristic of the time, were *not* the prime impetus behind UW. The number of cases per decade during the Cold War has yet to reappear. It is known that U.S. utilization of UW extended beyond that period; U.S. use of UW has not declined to “pre-Cold War” numbers.

2. Refining Contextual UW Typology

Another group of findings is associated with the Dynamic Typology of UW. This group is relevant to the cases. It appears that when the movements were *Revolutionary*, there seemed to be an emphasis on internal enablers much more than external ones. This may be a “vetting” process to ensure U.S. national

²⁹⁶ Department of the Army, “A Leader’s Guide for Unconventional Warfare,” by Mark Grdovic (SWCS PUB 09–1, 2009).

interests cause reason for intervention. Another interesting observation made while developing the typology was that the *coup d'état* occurred in almost half of the cases, far more than anticipated. This is partly a result of the expansion of definition beyond cases of military UW only. It seems that the military coup is most predominate in the Organic-Revolution quadrant.

3. UW Network Primacy and Relevancy

In the cases studied in this research, the decision to use UW resulted from the decision maker expressing a desire to change the status quo followed by the outstations providing an option to do it. The planning sequences in all the cases followed the same pattern. Policies, authorities and strategies put people in place for a variety of reasons or missions well before the decision point. Once in place, they developed relationships and built networks, rendering what this study calls mechanisms. As events move closer to the decision point, the decision maker expresses a desire to change the status quo and options are presented based on existing capabilities and practicalities. If a UW capability exists, and CW options are less practical to meet the desired goals coupled with advisors who have a background in UW, it was chosen. This process was so consistent in the research that it was considered a factor in the initial stages of the analysis. In the cases studied, the means to carry out the missions, the mechanisms for UW, and the plans were all driven from the bottom up. For the most part, these were generated from the outstations and presented as options rather than executed from checklists, or planned by strategists at the higher levels. In the cases studied, other findings reveal that, although the policies existed, the decision to use UW and prepare for it was more about innovation or permissions than authorities.

In all of the case analyses, the planners and executors used multiple methods to complete the mission. For instance, in Iran, the use of PSYOPs (Propaganda), Military Coup, political action, and guerrilla force as backup were part of the plan. In Tibet, guerrilla force was the main effort, although propaganda

via the Dalai Lama, and air support, were also critical. During the Laos campaign guerilla forces reinforced coups and political action, and there was an expanded use of military advisors. Nicaragua regarded the guerrilla force as the main effort as well, with political action, and air support also key to the plan.

While the purpose of this thesis was to identify the factors that led to a UW decision, the research still identifies trends in *how* a decision came about. One of the assumptions made prior to this research was that many of the cases available were executed by the CIA and were less relevant to the military and Special Forces, especially regarding details in *how* UW was executed after the decision point. All of the cases in the study had a mixture of CIA and military working together. Surprisingly, all four cases had a mixture of both the *how* and *who*.

More specific examples of the *who* can be found during the mission in Iran, when the Army Attaché provided information that would be pivotal to the operation, such as on Iranian military profiles and General Schwarzkopf's time as an advisor in country, training the police and guard forces and cultivating key relationships. In Tibet, U.S. Air Force cargo planes from Kadena, Army support personnel and Marine trainers in Camp Hale assigned to Tibet Task Force, and the use of Quantico in Virginia for training the Tibetans all show military representatives complementing the efforts by the CIA. In Laos, Special Forces soldiers were assigned to the PEO, working for the CIA as military attaches or "civilian contractors" under Project 404. Additionally, over a hundred SF advisors made up the MTT, plus additional members of the MAAG combined to make a large contingent of military personnel supporting the CIA. During the operation in Nicaragua, SOD, ISA, SF MTTs, JTF-Bravo, the Regional Training center, and the numerous named JCS exercises, including BIG PINE, again reveal the heavy importance of military participation. This challenges preconceived notions of a UW niche that belongs only to the CIA and demonstrates, at least in the cases studied, a whole of government approach.

Aside from a balanced and intra-agency approach, third nation surrogates and allies were also critical. In Iran, the UK was important to U.S. involvement. The network that was handed over became decisive to the success of the plan. Tibetan Resistance used Nepal as a sanctuary safe haven, Sikkam Royals acted as intermediaries for contacts and introductions, training sites were established in the Republic of China, and the Indians established the Special Forces unit Frontier Force from Tibetan refugees. Thai PARU, Filipino ECCOIL contractors, and numerous indigenous tribes were all stakeholders and participants during the operations in Laos. In Nicaragua, the United States used Argentinians (and allegedly Israelis) as trainers, Iranians and Israelis to provide arms, multiple countries to help finance, and the UCLAs who were likely third nation assets for key missions.

4. Objective Alignment

In several studies *overlapping objectives* have been advanced as a key factor in the success in UW. The idea that “U.S. military objectives must overlap with the indigenous force’s political objectives,” suggests that if the objectives were incongruent between the sponsor and movement, it would be extremely difficult for the U.S. to achieve its objectives.²⁹⁷ The last finding was that mutually congruent objectives at the strategic level, between the sponsor and *the movement*, were not as critical as assumed. While objective alignment may be effective for meeting military goals, it appears less relevant for UW decisions. In all the cases researched, it was apparent that the indigenous movement’s objectives only mattered as far as they fit into the narrative of the operation. It is clear that planners were fully aware that a UW mission had to be packaged in a narrative in keeping with the level of acceptability at the time, while it is difficult to verify the level of belief of the narrative in each of the cases. In other words, the

²⁹⁷ Basilici and Simmons propose five principles of UW: overlapping objectives, decontrol, restraint, perseverance, and fostering legitimacy. Steven P Basilici and Jeremy Simmons, *Transformation: A Bold Case for Unconventional Warfare*, (Monterey CA.: Naval Postgraduate School, 2004), 128.

importance of objective alignment may be a function of the UW capacity and networks included in the conceptual framework as opposed to capacity affecting the decision directly.

The purpose of this thesis was to identify the factors that led to a UW decision. The additional findings in this research, similar to the other results of this study, require further research in order to be validated. The next chapter reviews the process, the factors and theory, which may lend recommendations for UW stakeholders or the academic community in the future.

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V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“The trouble with the future is that it’s so much less knowable than the past.”

— John Lewis Gaddis²⁹⁸

A. CONCLUSION

This thesis has shown that a decision to choose UW as a strategic policy option is complex and multifaceted, and that it undoubtedly remains difficult to determine the exact factors or events that influenced the decision maker to choose a particular course of action. However, it is evident, based on the findings in this research, that there are parallels that transcend the differences in time, methods, motivations, personalities, and locations, common to the entire field of UW. In the end, it is the relationship among the factors, some generalizable and some specific that provides insight into answering the research question of the thesis.

Chapter I discussed the purpose of this study and presented the research question: *What factors lead to the use of unconventional warfare as a strategic policy option?* In order to determine the answer, the current definition of unconventional warfare, and the evolution of its meaning “*mission not method*” were discussed. The new definition expanded the field and established new parameters of UW. Chapter I concluded by presenting the inductive methodology that was used to select the cases and the comparative analysis used to answer the research question.

Chapter II drew upon the methods outlined in Chapter I to arrive at case selection, choosing UW cases with the highest degree of variance within a period. An attempt was made to identify all cases of UW conducted by the United States. The field was divided into three time periods separated by significant, global shaping events, defined as the Colonial Period, Cold War, and Hegemony

²⁹⁸ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 56.

of Power. In doing so, the Cold War period was deemed *the Golden Era of UW*, the period in U.S. history with the highest number of UW cases per decade. The Cold War cases were differentiated by using the *Dynamic Typology of UW*, showing how the movement was formed, either *synthetic* or *organic* and the nature of the movement, either *resistance* or *revolutionary*. Four cases of UW were selected, representing each quadrant of the typology. The cases included examples across the spectrum of UW over a thirty-five year period from the beginning to the end of the Cold War. A variety of goals, methods, times and locations were represented. Finally, a negative case, or non-UW case, was selected; Panama would be the case for comparison where conventional warfare was selected.

These cases were then examined in Chapter III. Each case was presented in historical context and included details and events that likely shaped the decision to use UW. These were divided into internal and external, constraints and enablers. Chapter IV began the comparative analysis of the enablers from the cases and the synthesis of the complex enablers into simplified concepts that still maintained their meaning while being general enough to test against other cases. These enablers were compared across the cases to eliminate outliers that may have enabled only one case but were not present in all. Eliminating enablers that were present in the non-case shortened the remaining list into what would be called *factors*. Finally, the factors were further synthesized into three variables leading to the following conceptual framework:

The Decision to use Unconventional Warfare is dependent on a UW Capability, Influence on Policy, and the Impracticality of Conventional Warfare. UW Capability is the summation of Authority, Organization, and Mechanism. Influence on Policy is a result of UW successes, continuation of inherited courses of action, and council from Trusted Advisor(s). The Impracticality of Conventional Warfare can be a result of any number of causes.

Chapter IV ended with a series of findings that were an unexpected byproduct of this research, and which may add insight into the nature and

aspects of UW. The historical cases of UW presented in this research identify that UW has been an often-used tool to achieve national military and political objectives. The selected case studies also demonstrated that the strategic utility of UW is flexible and has been used across a wide range of operational and political environments. However, its utility must be bounded within a broader review of the policies, strategies, and authorities as well as the capabilities, which allow for UW to be a valid option. The results of this study provide recommendations for the advancement of UW as a strategic option.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of this study concentrated on identifying the factors that led to the decision to use unconventional warfare. These factors, while remaining general, are specific to the U.S. political system and the UW capabilities unique to the U.S.. This research has proposed the use of unconventional warfare as a U.S. strategic policy option based on the factors and variables identified, and that it is and will remain relevant in the contemporary environment. The results of this study provide recommendations for the advancement of UW as a strategic option. These recommendations will be divided into two fields, those for the academic community and those for UW stakeholders. The theory proposed in this research provides a basis for these recommendations.

1. Academic Community

Additional research should be prioritized to first, further refine and develop the conceptual framework into a testable theory. Examining it against a wider variety of UW cases can further develop the framework. Additional observations should be pursued to fill gaps in UW research identified by this, and other works. A definitive list of UW cases, sponsored by the United States, should be created and proofed. Questions remain unanswered about the ratio of coups, methodology and links to “success,” and the overall value of UW as a strategic option and should be addressed. Additionally, further studies should look closer at the existing UW seven phase operational template in order to determine its

relevance and practicality in modern context. If this research is valid in determining that relationships and networks need to be developed *prior* to the decision point then *initial contact* can no longer be templated *after* the decision point in Phase II.²⁹⁹ The entire phased model should be re-evaluated and identified against cases in order to determine feasibility. Once these additional research tasks are complete, a more robust and systemic theory should be formulated in order give each variable a more precise weight and accuracy in terms of how they impact the UW decision.

2. UW Stakeholders

Since the new definition of UW was created, the community has been challenged to determine the ideal posture or structure to be able to conduct unconventional warfare and the implications this shift will have on the force in terms of organization, training, and deployment. In the first chapter this process was described as trying to answer the *How* before understanding the *Why*. The value of this study for the community is a refinement of the question, “How can organizations be best postured to *conduct UW*?” The revised question is, “How can organizations be best postured to *effect the decision to use UW*?” This poses a new mindset that should inform stakeholders of innovative approaches while developing UW capability. The following suggested lines of effort are examples of how to influence the variables and factors identified in the proposed theory.

a. Related to the First Variable: UW Capability

The most weighted of the factors identified in this study is the importance of a UW capability that is developed pre-decision. UW stakeholders can improve this capability through three areas of focus: the organization, the

²⁹⁹ The seven-phase UW framework is a conceptual construct that aids in planning. It is meant to depict the normal phases of a UW operation Phase I: Preparation, Phase II: Initial Contact, Phase III: Infiltration, Phase IV: Organization, Phase V: Build-up, Phase VI: Employment, Phase VII: Transition. TC 18–01 *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare* (November 2010), 1–8 sec. 1–44.

authority, and the mechanism. The organizational focus should continue to evolve force structures, utilizing an organizational design approach to support different aspects of UW such as continued education and innovation, training and exercises, and operations. UW stakeholders should support force structures designed to develop the UW capability in preparation for a strategic need, and to influence the decision point. Instead, organizations appear to focus on how to execute the mission once it has been decided. In short, UW stakeholders have been focused on the wrong side of the decision point. In the cases researched for this study, the keys to the organization were based more on flexibility than structure. Opportunities were created by the persistent presence created by other non-UW focused operations. The relationships and networks created by military advisors, attaché's, and forward deployed U.S. officials in a variety of diplomatic, humanitarian, and intelligence roles that most impacted the UW capability pre-decision.

With regard to authority, stakeholders must continue to support national strategy by developing UW options. Policy and authority are likely sufficient to support current UW efforts, whereas it seems that strategic planning has found a void in adequate and competent UW strategists. UW stakeholders should develop strategists that can provide decision makers with adequate plans that will support their goals. Additionally, stakeholders should continue to challenge themselves by attempting to answer policy questions with adequate UW answers. Finally, the mechanism, comprised of relationships, networks, and organizations can be improved by coordinating with regional commands to unify efforts, validate engagements by providing task and purpose specific to expanding UW capabilities in the steady state, operationalizing all engagements and managing the resultant data. In order to do this, it is recommended the U.S. create a framework of organizations and employments that are not mutually exclusive to either FID or UW but rather support both. Stakeholders can strengthen their efforts to attain policy objectives by coordinating with other intelligence agencies to collaborate, both at the tactical level where relationships

and networks are being built, and at the strategic level where plans are being developed. As the cases in this research showed there is no one method, or one organization that *owns* UW. The findings in this study validate the concept of a more joint, combined, inner-agency, partner-nation approach. Stakeholders should look to capitalize on building the relationships and networks within the U.S. government as well as in target countries prior to decision point in the *steady state*.

b. Related to the Second Variable: Influence DMs towards choosing UW

Stakeholders can focus efforts to improve the expected reward for choosing UW by following three steps. First, increasing credibility by achieving milestones in UW capability. Affecting the first variable will achieve this. Then, stakeholders should showcase success, to the right audience, to demonstrate a capability exists. One method to help showcase success, or at least efforts, is to utilize social network analysis to map UW networks. This will provide planners with metrics of accomplishment, identify capability and limitations, and help identify the assets that can be utilized to achieve certain objectives. Regional commands can take ownership of this type of data to provide oversight, guidance, and focus of efforts. The final step in this process is to increase influence of decision makers, mainly through the first two steps. By achieving UW capability, then demonstrating it, some expected reward would result.

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